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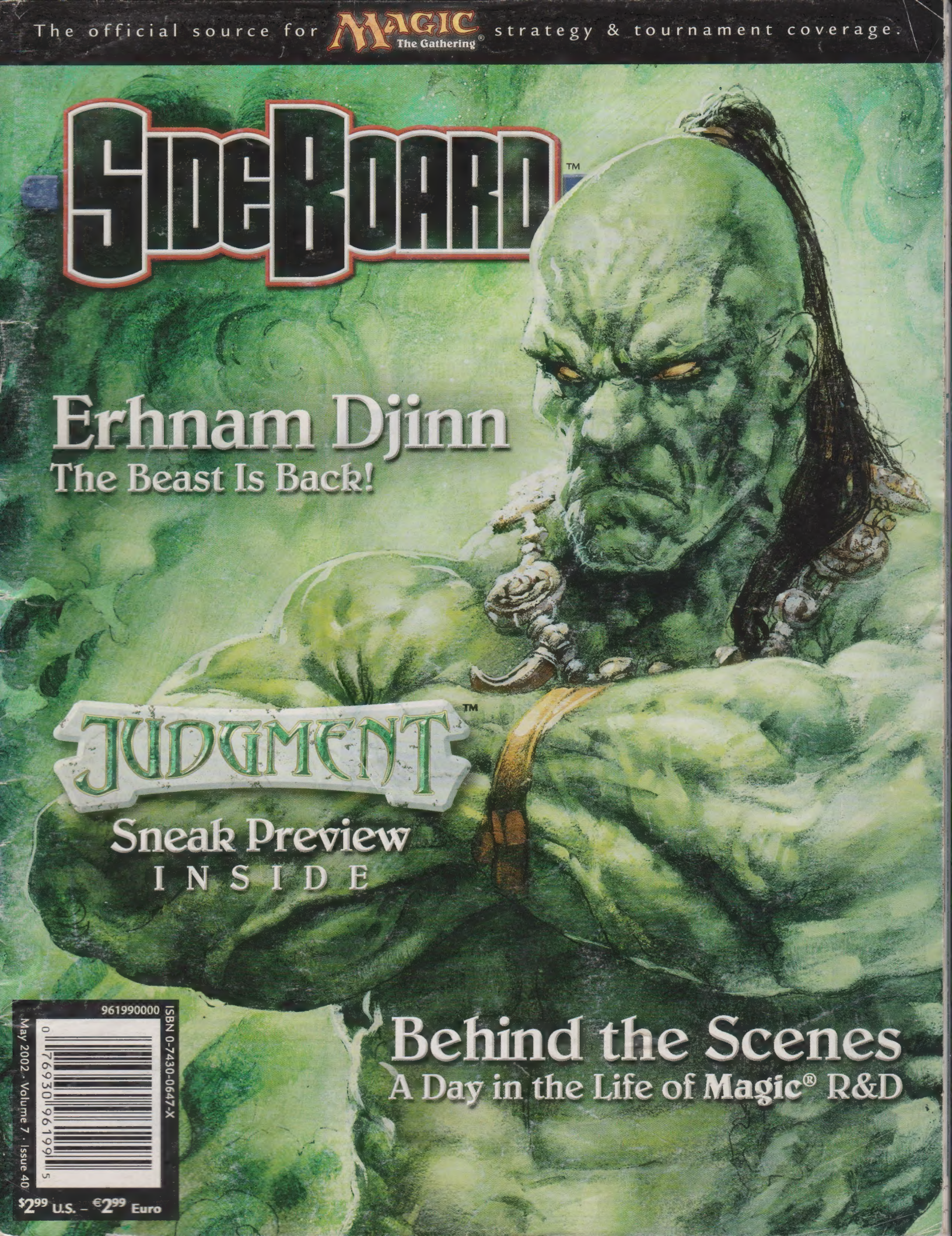

Erhnam Djinn
The Beast Is Back!

JUDGMENT™

Sneak Preview
INSIDE

Behind the Scenes
A Day in the Life of Magic® R&D

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Erhnam Djinn
3
Creature — Djinn
At the beginning of your upkeep, target non-Wall creature an opponent controls gains forestwalk until your next upkeep.
He provides a safe path to nowhere.
Illus. Greg Staples
4/5

May 27, 2002

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Wizard

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4 **Pro Tour–Osaka** — Ken Ho's victory, an impressive French performance, Nantuko Shades everywhere, and madness reign supreme.

9 **Osaka Masters** — Kai Budde crosses "Win a Masters" off his To-Do List. Team Panzer Hunters takes second, again.

12 **Pro Tour–San Diego** — *Odyssey* Draft ends with the first-ever French Pro Tour champion!

18 **San Diego Masters** — Standard-dominating Pychatog decks made their debut in San Diego.

20 **Grand Prix** — Coverage and results from twelve Grand Prix events!

32 **Erhnam Djinn** — Brian Kibler takes a look at the history of green's most famous fatty—from *Arabian Nights* to *Judgment*.

34 **Judgment's Elephant Guide** — Call of the Herd is not the only good card that generates Elephants.

35 **Judgment's Nantuko Monastery** — Will the Monastery revitalize white in Standard?

36 **Strategy** — Standard, Block, and Draft strategy by top **Magic** pros. What more can you ask for?

46 **Extended Tech** — Brian Kibler takes "Miracle Gro" to the next level with "Super Gro"!

48 **Magic R&D** — An inside look at Wizards of the Coast **Magic** Research and Development.

50 **Japan Profile** — The evolution of the second-biggest **Magic** community in the world.

52 **Brian Hegstad Profile** — National team member, skilled player, and future star.

53 **Alex Shvartsman Profile** — An icon of the **Magic** circuit.

54 **Insider Trading** — Mark Rosewater gives you an insider's look at *Torment* and reveals a few *Judgment* secrets.

55 **Outsider Trading** — Alex Shvartsman talks about *Torment* singles and ***Magic** Online*.

56 **Global Rankings** — Top-ranked players from around the world.

60 **DCI Information** — Jeff Donais gives you the latest Tournament News and DCI Q&A.

62 **Events Calendar** — A comprehensive calendar of all upcoming major **Magic** events.

Ken Ho Wins in Japan

First American Champion in a Year

by Josh Bennet

Let's face it, not everyone can afford a whirlwind trip to Japan. It was no surprise then that only 277 qualified players went to Osaka to do battle in *Odyssey* Block Constructed. The popular opinion among pros was that there was very little "tech" to be had. Everyone knew what the most powerful cards were, and it was just a matter of finding the right combinations and then doing a little fine-tuning. They were soon proven correct, as only three deck types comprised fully three-quarters of the tournament.

The first deck type was blue-green. There were two versions, one aimed at maximizing madness, and another that worked for a more leisurely win backed by the ridiculous Compulsion. Both played like aggro-control and had many cards in common: Wild Mongrel, Basking Rootwalla, Arrogant Wurm, Roar of the Wurm, Æther Burst, and Circular Logic were in almost every incarnation. Also, Kai Budde chose to run this deck, which makes it seem like a sound investment.

Next up was monoblack control. It was near creatureless, giving the nod to the backbreaking Nantuko Shade and the Shambling Swarm removal machine. In fact, the deck's removal line was monstrous. Innocent Blood, Chainer's Edict, and Mutilate made sure that life expectancies would remain short. Diabolic Tutor and Skeletal Scrying kept the deck in business, and Mind Sludge was almost always Mind Twist. The deck also ran Cabal Coffers to make sure it would have the mana needed carry out its diabolic plans. Haunting Echoes was the backup plan, leaving the opponent helpless and ensuring he or she would run out of cards first.

Ordinarily, these two decks would be joined by a dedicated beatdown deck. The monogreen beatdown deck, however, couldn't quite hang with the top two. A beatdown deck would have needed a lightning draw or an early Squirrel Nest to stand up to monoblack's removal, and Rancid Earth handily answered the Nest. Against blue-green, the beatdown strategy was invalidated by Aboshan, Cephalid Emperor in the sideboard. Only four of the nineteen players who played monogreen made it to Day 2. Jon Finkel was not one of those four, supporting claims that **Magic** is no longer his top priority.

That brings us to the third most-represented deck: blue-black Psychatog. Also founded on the drawing power of Compulsion, but supplemented by cantrips and Concentrate, this deck's best trick was Upheaval, which allowed it to win long games all at once against monoblack. In a pinch, Æther Burst would clear a path for a quick win. Shadowmage Infiltrator appeared only in small numbers because it is easily stymied by Wild Mongrel and Nantuko Shade.

Conspicuously absent from the field was white. Oh sure, some of the threshold decks ran Mystic Enforcer, but the most-played white card was Patrol Hound, and it appeared in only four decks. Basic plains were outnumbered by main-deck Thought Devourers. Though much-mocked, Mattias Kettil and Morgan Karlsson finished respectably piloting green-white madness decks that featured Tireless Tribe to accelerate Basking Rootwalla and Arrogant Wurm. Red was also somewhat sparse, but Fiery Temper and Violent Eruption appeared in reasonable numbers.

Heading the standings after seven rounds was none other than last-year's Block Constructed finalist, Tsuyoshi Fujita. The jitterbugging **Magic** Invitationalist was also at the front of a twelve-strong crew of Japanese players, including luminaries such as Itaru Ishida of Panzer Hunters and old-schooler Tsuyoshi Ikeda.

As amazing as Japan's work was, France outdid them. Olivier Ruel led the way in third place, followed by three more in the Top 16 and four more in the Top 32, including high-profile names such as Wilfried Ranque of Metagames, Nicolas Olivieri of Les Plus Class, and Invitationalist Antoine Ruel. At a quiet 7-0 was Jens Thoren, who just recently enjoyed a Top 8 at Pro Tour–San Diego.

The **Magic** Colony experiment did not put up the blockbuster results its members had hoped for. Their blue-red-black deck, designed by Ben Rubin and Brian Kibler, put only one Colonist, Brian Hegstad, into Day 2. Ken Ho and Jeff Cunningham broke from the group and ran the blue-green aggro-control deck, and both made the cut as a result. Going into Day 2, the Colony was overshadowed by Your Move Games. Rob Daugherty and Peter Guevin were on pace for the Top 8 with Darwin Kastle and Justin Gary close behind with their versions of monoblack control.

The relatively small field meant that there were only

Back: Osyp Lebedowicz, Jens Thoren, Nicolas Olivieri, Olivier Ruel, Sylvain Lauriol, and Christophe Haim. Front: Ken Ho and Rob Dougherty.

ninety-five players with the 4-2-1 records required to make Day 2. The unlucky number ninety-six, with 12 points and excellent tiebreakers, was none other than Kamiel Cornelissen. Asian Grand Prix fixture Alex Shvartsman also failed to leap the final hurdle, dropping after going 2-4. His experiment in open testing revealed the four strongest color-combinations, but the versions he posted to *Sideboard* Online were a few cards off from those at the top of the standings.

But Shvartsman didn't have it as rough as Matt Linde, U.S. National Champion Trevor Blackwell, and ABU-sympathizers Noah Boeken and Phil Freneau. All of them started with three successive losses. Only Freneau went back for fourths.

Any murkiness in the metagame cleared up completely by Day 2. Seventy of the ninety-five decks were members of the "big three." That meant that most players passed through seven very similar rounds of play. The monoblack mirror match was particularly uninteresting, turning mostly on Mind Sludge in the first game, then shifting to the Rancid Earth–Braids draw in the second.

Kai Budde was meanwhile taking a much-needed break from winning. After limping into Day 2 with the requisite 4-2-1, he dropped his eighth-round match to Singapore's Sam Lau and found himself suffering the ignominy of having a bye. That was all the incentive he needed to jump back on the right track, finishing 24th overall. The 7 additional pro points he earned will serve to tighten his stranglehold on the Player of the Year race.

The "King of Beatdown" also managed to quash rumors of his untimely demise. Dave Price was once more in danger of dropping off the "Gravy Train." Clad in a Deadguy T-shirt and unnerving his opponents with his patented "death stare," Price finished Day 1 in tenth place. Day 2 wasn't as extraordinary, but the King still finished 28th, good enough to keep him on the Tour.

Speaking of players not being counted out, popular punching bag Gary Wise continued to show up his detractors, following up his 12th-place finish in San Diego with an 11th in Osaka. In his match against two-time Masters Champ Ben Rubin, Wise failed to count out his own sideboard. He had accidentally sideboarded into a 62-card deck, earning himself a game-loss. He went on to win the match regardless.

Sadly, hometown hero Tsuyoshi Fujita could not successfully fight through seven more rounds of Swiss, finishing in 14th place. Coincidentally, that put him just behind compatriot Tsuyoshi Ikeda. Japan will have to wait for its return to the spotlight.

The French dominance continued into the Top 8, with French players making up fully half of it. Familiar faces Olivier Ruel and Nicholas Olivieri shared the spotlight with relative newcomers Christophe Haim and Sylvain Lauriol. Ranque finished just short in tenth place. This dominating finish bodes well for Pro Tour–Nice.

Rounding out the Top 8 were **Magic** Colonist Ho, Your Move Games's Dougherty, Osyp Lebedowicz of team TOGIT, and Jens Thoren of Sweden. Dougherty continues to enjoy incredible Constructed success, with this appearance following his Top 16 at Pro Tour–New Orleans. Thoren's performance also turned heads, as back-to-back Top 8s usually do. Thoren's success was doubly surprising because his testing hadn't revealed the importance of Braids in the monoblack mirror match; thus, he didn't have it in his sideboard.

Ho was running a focused blue-green madness deck. The most interesting departure from the norm was that he ran Standstill. Lebedowicz, having teamed up with CMU for this event, was running CMU's Psychatog deck. Haim and Lauriol both ran blue-green.

The quarterfinals were incredibly close, with all but the Dougherty-Haim match going the full five games. Haim's blue-green threshold deck couldn't hack it after Dougherty 'boarded up with Faceless Butcher, Ghastly Demise, and Mesmeric Fiend. Lebedowicz lost a hard-fought match with Thoren when, in the final game, Lebedowicz failed to draw the land needed to pull off the Upheaval–Zombie Infestation combo before Thoren found a Mind Sludge to empty his hand.

Ruel managed to edge out Olivieri in an all-French showdown. Meanwhile Ho and Lauriol were still duking it out in the third game. They were into the fifth by the time Ruel had finished dismantling Dougherty in three straight. Dougherty couldn't get a fourth land in time to drop his Braids in both games 2 and 3. Ruel also held Braids, and from there it was academic.

After Ho had taken his match against Lauriol, he had to face Thoren. Though he was thought the underdog, he emerged victorious in just four games. That meant he would face Ruel for the championship, where Ruel had a superstitious advantage: Ruel's last-place finish at the **Magic** Invitational had "cursed" him to win a Pro Tour event this year, just as Steve O'Mahoney-Schwartz, Gary Wise, and Zvi Mowshowitz had done before him.

Over the first two games of the final, Ruel seemed unbeatable. He seemed to have every answer. It was as if he was illustrating why all the pros thought monoblack destroyed blue-green without Compulsion. In the third game, however, Ruel stumbled as a land-light hand failed to develop. He was always a step behind Ho's creatures, his life total plummeting. Just when it looked like he would stabilize, Ho dropped Squirrel Nest.

But Ruel's smile did not fade, and neither did Ho's glower. Ho's mood darkened further when he had to take another mulligan. He blazed out of the gates, however, and played Standstill, forcing Ruel to let him refuel. In short order, Werebear and Blightcutter had Ruel on a short clock. Ruel Tutored for Mutilate and fell to 6. On the next turn, he tried to play Mutilate, but Ho tapped his Tarnished Citadel for blue—his only blue source on the table—and played Circular Logic for the win.

It all came down to the final game. Again, Ho mulliganed, and frowned at his six. Ruel had chosen to keep a sketchy two-land hand. Ho followed up an island with Tarnished Citadel, which once again proved its worth, helping him get out Werebear. Ruel had no removal in hand, just Rancid Earth. He blew up the island, hoping to further frustrate Ho, but Ho had another. While Ruel continued to draw cards he couldn't play, Ho started hitting with creatures. Soon Ruel slumped in his chair. He drew a fourth swamp the turn before he lost.

And so that's how Ken Ho used his one Tarnished Citadel to win Pro Tour–Osaka, in the process validating the **Magic** Colony. Plans are already in the works for a second Colony, though the residents are as yet undetermined. As for Ruel, he simply shrugged at his failure to make good on his Invitational curse, smiled, and said, "Better to win Nice or Worlds, don't you think?"

Top 8 Profiles

by Josh Bennett

Ken Ho

North Carolina's Ken Ho is on the fast track to Pro Tour success. Last season he showed consistency, finishing in the Top 32 at Chicago, Tokyo, and Barcelona—the sort of finishes pros dream about. It also put him into the thick of a three-person Rookie of the Year race, but a poor performance at Worlds cost him the title.

This time the ride was a little bumpier. He missed Day 2 at both New Orleans and San Diego. He then got the call from his buddies at **Magic** Colony and decided that a month of gaming was just what he needed to sharpen his skills. It worked like gangbusters. Not only was he back in fighting form, but he also had a great deck. This was the blue-green madness deck that took full advantage of Basking Rootwalla and Arrogant Wurm using Aquamoeba and Wild Mongrel. It was not the Colony's first choice, but Ho wanted to run it.

Not only does his taking the whole show lend weight to the whole Colony theory, but it also shows that Ho is no flash in the pan. Though just out of high school (who wouldn't want to spend a year before college working the pro circuit?), Ho has already displayed several characteristics sported by the best: dedication, hard work, and focus. Especially the last.

Ho showed remarkable determination in his matches, particularly when he had to kick off Top 8 play with a five-hour quarterfinal marathon while the rest of the competitors got to relax and eat lunch. Ho was always on the go, with few breaks from 9:00 A.M. on. Even getting past the general weariness, it takes a lot of strength to be down 2-1 in the final, take a mulligan, and still keep your cool (with a crowd full of French supporters pumping their fists, mind you). This is why Ho earned his title.

Ho was a little stunned at the end of the tournament, and who can blame him? He brightened when the topic of his running Tarnished Citadel came up. "People had to read it all day," he said. And that's a tribute to his skills. I mean, he couldn't possibly be playing *that* Tarnished Citadel. But he was. And he used it to win Pro Tour–Osaka. How does that feel? Ho couldn't help but smirk and say, "Awesome."

Olivier Ruel

Already famous on the European Grand Prix circuit, Olivier Ruel's trademark sly smile and penchant for stuffed animals became known intercontinentally when he joined brother Antoine at the **Magic** Invitational last year. There they had the dubious honor of sharing last place, a finish that came with it a "curse" of a Pro Tour victory in the following year. All tournament long, it seemed like this was Olivier's chance.

Far too long he'd been "the other Ruel brother." He played alongside Antoine on their highly successful Black Ops team. At Worlds 2001, he watched from the sidelines while Antoine played his way to the semifinals. Again at Pro Tour–New Orleans, Olivier scrubbed out of Day 1 while Antoine made the Top 64. He was sick of being second fiddle.

He broke out in San Diego with a 29th-place finish, but came to Osaka without expectations. Each time his name was announced as a Feature Match, he'd make his way to The Pit wearing an expression of utter bemusement, as if at any moment someone would realize that he wasn't supposed to be there. But he kept winning. His monoblack control deck served him well, sporting a lean mana-base and a number of utility cards.

Always operating under a half-serious false modesty, Olivier was sincere when he shifted the topic of discussion away from himself and to his compatriots. "It's wonderful to finally see the French players get finishes that match their abilities," he said. It always seems like Olivier is the captain of the French team, playing to the crowd with his own particular flair, and he's always the player the French have their eyes on. Even in the final, as he watched a two-game lead turn into a second-place finish, he maintained an air of congeniality and charm. On the subject of his "Invitational curse," he was his usual coy self, insisting that he really wanted to win Nice or perhaps Worlds. After this weekend, those words seem less far-fetched than they might have been before.

Rob Dougherty

Your Move Games's (YMG's) Rob Dougherty has been laying down the law at Constructed Pro Tour events this past year. At Chicago, he took Fires to a fourth-place finish. At New Orleans, he and YMG debuted "Benzo," and Dougherty was in contention right up to the end, falling to teammate Dave Humpherys in a last-round match for a spot in the Top 8. Then he and his team came to Osaka with the deck of the tournament—monoblack control—and this time Dougherty finished third. Somewhere in there he found time to take a break and draft at San Diego, finishing "only" 40th for his trouble.

The most striking thing about Dougherty is his sporting play. After being mercilessly crushed by top draws from Ruel, when a single swamp would have been enough to turn the tide, he was just as quick to smile and offer the hand as when he was in the victor's seat. Ruel tried to apologize for Dougherty's bad luck, but Dougherty just shook his head, calling it "part of the game." That's Dougherty in a nutshell. He'll play his hardest against every opponent, and then thank him or her for the opportunity.

Immediately after his match, he joked that if his Top 8 finishes follow the pattern they've taken—fifth-, fourth-, and third-place—he won't have to wait long for a title of his own. "Assuming," he added hastily, "I keep making Top 8s." Frankly, Dougherty shows no signs of slowing down.

Jens Thoren

Sweden's Jens Thoren is easy to miss in a crowd. Soft-spoken and reserved, Thoren is nevertheless one of the hottest new pros. Until Pro Tour–San Diego, he was the player most Europeans would point to as "overdue." He was teaming with some of the best Limited and Constructed minds in Europe (most notably Johan Sadeghpour and Tomi Walamies on team Punisher, and frequenting prodraft chat room **#wisedraft**) and was primed to make his move. He strolled to the final at San Diego, and now he's shown his skills in Constructed with his fourth-place finish in Osaka. Back-to-back Top 8s have a way of getting you noticed.

Thoren is also well known for his completely dispassionate demeanor when playing. Throughout his many Feature Matches this weekend, he was rarely caught with a smile.

Thoren chose to run the deck of the tournament: monoblack control. Though his design was close to what he thought was optimal, he spent the tournament at a huge disadvantage. His testing had failed to show how important Braids, Cabal Minion was in the mirror match, and as a result he didn't sideboard it. It was like playing with one arm tied behind his back all weekend!

But with a combination of skill and luck, he managed to smash to the Top 8, winning more than his share of mirror matches along the way. His loss to Ho in the semifinals foreshadowed Ho's win over Ruel in the final. With so much experience in the round of eight in so short a time, it won't be long before Thoren quietly assumes his position at the top of the game.

Sylvain Lauriol

French university student Sylvain Lauriol of Bagnals sur Ceze seemed to be in the shadows cast by the other French participants at Osaka. On one hand, you had the French stars Olivier Ruel and Nicolas Olivieri demonstrating their skills once again, and on the other Christophe Haim was walking into his first Tour event and making the Top 8. That meant there was little spotlight left over for Lauriol.

It didn't help that Lauriol is a mild-mannered, easygoing sort. This was his fourth Tour event, just enough for the thrill to have faded. He's gotten used to the traveling, as the Tour has taken him all around the world. In fact, he once represented Scotland at Worlds while studying there.

To call his deck unorthodox would be an understatement. Eschewing the mighty Arrogant Wurm completely, Lauriol instead ran a fruit salad of blue and green creatures, keeping his mana curve low. Despite running both Breakthrough and Careful Study, he played only a single Nimble Mongoose. He did have some savvy main-deck "tech," however: Stupefying Touch. A cantrip answer to the format's pervasive creatures such as Wild Mongrel, Basking Rootwalla, Psychatog, and Nantuko Shade, Touch helped pave his way to the Top 8.

His match against Ho was a marathon, lasting five hours over five games, and the whole time Lauriol kept a friendly and exuberant attitude. He is one who truly loves playing this game.

Nicolas Olivieri

Nicolas Olivieri is no stranger to the Pro Tour. One of France's veteran talents, he's been around since 1997 Pro Tour–Los Angeles. For a long time, he was dogged by an inability to post a top finish, but that curse was broken at 2001 Pro Tour–Chicago when he cracked the Top 32.

At Pro Tour–New York, he became known as the anchor of the spontaneous French Limited wrecking ball, Les Plus Class. Rounded out by newcomers Amiel Tenenbaum and Gabriel Nassif, Les Plus Class stormed a path to the Top 4, upsetting the star-studded Illuminati before being taken down in the final by the mighty Kai Budde and Phoenix Foundation.

After that came another lean period, but Olivieri came back with a vengeance at Osaka. His black beatdown deck was the only rogue deck in the Top 8, moving past the triad of monoblack control, blue-green, and Psychatog decks. It was optimized to take full advantage of Braids and splashed Shadowmage Infiltrator instead of Psychatog. He ended Day 2 in fourth place. In the quarterfinals, he ran into countryman Olivier Ruel, and was bested in five very tight games. He hopes that his finish heralds more individual success in the future.

Osyp Lebedowicz

It's about time people started hearing about Osyp Lebedowicz. Hailing from New Jersey, Lebedowicz has been working to get in on the big show since the *Mercadian Masques* set, posting records that had locals promising big things from him.

He didn't disappoint. He finally made the Tour earlier this season at New Orleans, finishing 17th. Despite fancying himself more of a Constructed player, he followed up New Orleans with a 36th-place finish at San Diego. Now he has a Top 8. Not bad for five months' work.

Lebedowicz began preparing for Osaka with teammates Eric Ziegler, Jon Sonne, and Scott McCord, among others. But he soon hooked up with the illustrious team CMU through long-time friend Eugene Harvey. He chose to run their Psychatog deck, which distinguishes itself from the field by running Predict instead of Compulsion.

The recent Rutgers graduate is within striking distance of the Rookie of the Year title. More importantly, his work at Osaka has earned him the fourth-highest Constructed rating in the world, right behind Dougherty, Tomi Walamies, and Ho. This gives him a spot in the Nice Masters Series—another chance to show why his is a name you should remember.

Christophe Haim

It was clear from Haim's face on Sunday that he was reveling in every first-timer's dream. Stepping into The Pit under the lights and cameras, it finally seemed to hit Haim just how far he'd come. A week ago he was a shoe salesman in Paris. Now he was just three match wins away from being crowned Pro Tour champion. Heck, if Farid Meraghni could do it, why couldn't he?

He had a lot going for him. He was well prepared, supported by a playtest group that included many of France's best, including the Ruel brothers and Olivieri, among others. His deck was similar to Champion Ken Ho's in that it aimed to abuse undercosted green madness creatures by discarding them to Wild Mongrel and Aquamoeba. He also took a second path, however: threshold. He ran Nimble Mongooses and Werebears, bringing them online with Breakthrough and Careful Study.

Even his elimination at the hands of Dougherty could not dim the excitement in Haim's eyes. He accepted the handshakes and consolations in a fog of accomplishment, and soon he was talking about his next stop: Nice. Though Meraghni's monster lead in the Rookie of the Year race will make him tough to catch, Haim's performance this weekend shows that he shouldn't be counted out just yet.

Osaka Final Standings

Rank	Name	Prize	Pro Points
1	Ken Ho	$30,000	32
2	Olivier Ruel	$20,000	24
3	Jens Thoren	$15,000	16
4	Robert Dougherty	$13,000	16
5	Sylvain Lauriol	$9,500	12
6	Nicolas Olivieri	$8,500	12
7	Osyp Lebedowicz	$7,500	12
8	Christophe Haim	$6,500	12
9	Geoffrey Siron	$6,000	8
10	Wielfried Ranque	$5,500	8
11	Gary Wise	$5,000	8
12	Gerard Fabiano	$4,500	8
13	Tsuyoshi Ikeda	$4,100	8
14	Tsuyoshi Fujita	$3,800	8
15	Eric Froehlich	$3,500	8
16	Andrea Santin	$3,250	8
17	Eric Ziegler	$3,000	7
18	Brian Davis	$2,750	7
19	Roger Sorino	$2,550	7
20	Jonathan Sonne	$2,400	7
21	Ben Rubin	$2,250	7
22	Raffaele Lo Moro	$2,100	7
23	Gabriel Nassif	$2,000	7
24	Kai Budde	$1,900	7
25	Endre H Skjetne	$1,800	6
26	Guillaume Daoust	$1,700	6
27	Peter Guevin	$1,600	6
28	David Price	$1,500	6
29	Øyvind Ødegaard	$1,400	6
30	Takayuki Nagaoka	$1,350	6
31	Alexis Dumay	$1,300	6
32	Jonathan Pechon	$1,250	6
33	Anthony Menzer	$1,200	5
34	Luis van Riet	$1,150	5
35	Daniel Clegg	$1,100	5
36	Robert Lloyd	$1,050	5
37	Scott McCord	$1,000	5
38	Florent Lefranc	$950	5
39	Matteo Di Tomaso	$900	5
40	Luca Chiera	$875	5
41	Jeff Cunningham	$850	5
42	Frank Karsten	$825	5
43	Raphael Levy	$800	5
44	Akira Asahara	$775	5
45	Adam Lane	$750	5
46	Nikolaj Wolkoff	$730	5
47	Michael Turian	$710	5
48	Lee Steht	$690	5
49	Takamasa Fukata	$675	4
50	Eugene Harvey	$660	4
51	Darwin Kastle	$645	4
52	Abraham Snepvangers	$630	4
53	Andrew Mitchell	$615	4
54	Jin Okamoto	$600	4
55	Antoine Menard	$590	4
56	Antoine Ruel	$580	4
57	Jay Elarar	$570	4
58	Eisaku Itadani	$560	4
59	Michael Pustilnik	$550	4
60	Zvi Mowshowitz	$540	4
61	Arjan van Leeuwen	$530	4
62	Jelger Wiegersma	$520	4
63	Sam Lie Kang Lau	$510	4
64	Alan Comer	$500	4
65	Morgan Karlsson		3
66	Tobias Gemuend		3
67	Steve Wei Quan Tan		3
68	Frederico Bastos		3
69	Go Anan		3
70	Julien Bernard		3
71	Takao Higaki		3
72	Chris Clapton		3
73	Shuuhei Nakamura		3
74	Justin Gary		3
75	Palle Poulsen		3
76	Itaru Ishida		3
77	Daniele Canavesi		3
78	Tim Rivera		3
79	Jean Charles Salvin		3
80	Brian Hegstad		3
81	Oliver Schneider		3
82	Mattias Kettil		3
83	John Balla		3
84	Matthew Rubin		3
85	Huei-Saint Shwe		3
86	Raphaël Gennari		3
87	Giulio Barra		3
88	Albertus Hui Chin Law		3
89	James Thompson		3
90	Joshua Smith		3
91	Helmut Summersberger		3
92	Brian Kibler		3
93	Akitsugu Ito		3
94	Andreas Kruschel		3
95	David Beduzzi		3
96	Kamiel Cornelissen		3
97	Masahiko Morita		3
98	Christopher Soots		3
99	Alexander Witt		3
100	Daniel O'Brien		3
101	Lucas Duchow		3
102	Lars Birch		3
103	Peter Szigeti		3
104	Dario Parazzoli		3
105	Alfred Lindblom		3
106	Michael Bower		3
107	Ben Ronaldson		3
108	Pierre Malherbaud		3
109	Paul Rietzl		3
110	Danny Mandel		3
111	Lovre Crnobori		3
112	Katsuhiro Mori		3
113	Paulo Cardona		3
114	Ben Torgerson		3
115	Jesse Karppinen		3
116	Kaare Anderson		3
117	Jeffrey Magid		3
118	Mattias Jorstedt		3
119	Patrick Mello		3
120	Jill Costigan		3
121	Andrew Cuneo		3
122	Chen Yu Weng		3
123	Mitchell Tamblyn		3
124	Boonc Jirapongtraklul		3
125	Chris Stowers		3
126	Ding Yuen Leong		3
127	Stefan Fries		3
128	Scott Gerhardt		3
129	David Humpherys		2
130	Chris Benafel		2
131	Ruud Warmenhoven		2
132	Alex Borteh		2
133	Nicolas Labarre		2
134	Richard Wei Jei Chiu		2
135	Brett Allen		2
136	Gonçalo Nunes		2
137	Thomas Shaw		2
138	Kentaro Yuasa		2
139	Michihisa Onoda		2
140	Gene Brumby		2
141	Hisaya Tanaka		2
142	Oliver Braun		2
143	Mng Yi (Miller) Tsai		2
144	Vincent Boulanger		2
145	Dils Ramos Da Fonseca		2
146	Brett Shears		2
147	Hans Joachim Höh		2
148	Keen Meng Nichol Wong		2
149	Antonino De Rosa		2
150	Kazuaki Arahori		2
151	Eric Taylor		2
152	Pete Norris		2
153	Ryuuichi Arita		2
154	David Wei Phang Kwan		2
155	Steven OMS		2
156	Kelvin Yew Teck Hoon		2
157	Kim Yin Kok		2
158	Chiu Hsiang Chang		2
159	Dennis Yuliadinata		2
160	John Honea		2
161	Svante Landgraf		2
162	Gerard Godinez-Estrada		2
163	Tomoya Tsushima		2
164	Kunihiko Kishishita		2
165	Johan Sadeghpour		2
166	Jeff Fung		2
167	Felix Schneiders		2
168	Gabe Walls		2
169	Chikara Hayashi		2
170	Claudio Moraes		2
171	Alex Serrano		2
172	Jason Adams		2
173	Francisco Javi Martin		2
174	Ming Huang Royce Chai		2
175	John Shuler		2
176	Justin Polin		2
177	Joe Connolly		2
178	James Halter		2
179	Clifford Yap		2
180	Jiawei Qian		2
181	Alex Smith		2
182	Jimmy Bucknell		2
183	Eivind Nitter		2
184	Ken Krouner		2
185	Jeff Taylor		2
186	Daniel OMS		2
187	Massimo Machella		2
188	Tiago Chan		2
189	Steven Beacham		2
190	Nathan Heiss		2
191	Brock Parker		2
192	Akihiro Takakuwa		2
193	Kazufumi Abe		2
194	Terry Tsang		2
195	Kris Lohman		2
196	Dirk Baberowski		2
197	Yuuki Murakami		2
198	Anton Jonsson		2
199	Lucas Hager		2
200	Sam Gomersall		2
201	Hiroshi Kawasaki		2
202	Alan Tarr		2
203	Jan Tomcani		2
204	Andrew Mortensen		2
205	Alex Shvartsman		2
206	Masashiro Kuroda		2
207	Amiel Tenenbaum		2
208	Andrew Gravlin		2
209	Denes Kocis		2
210	Gionata Dal Farra		2
211	Robert Weimer		2
212	Kevin O'Connor		2
213	Thomas Andersson		2
214	José Francisco Silva		2
215	Matsui Hisataka		2
216	Gary Rush		2
217	Kensuke Miyazaki		2
218	Vitor Da Silva		2
219	Sung-Bum Lee		2
220	Svante Rikberg		2
221	Stewart Shinkins		2
222	Andrew Stokinger		2
223	Takahiro Endo		2
224	Shin Gill-Won		2
225	Shin'ya Wachi		2
226	Daniel Steinsdörfer		2
227	Matthew Vienneau		2
228	Christiaan du Plessis		2
229	Rintaro Yamasaki		2
230	Kenny Crawford		2
231	Michael Williamson		2
232	Shawn Kiernan		2
233	Mark Herberholz		2
234	Youn Ming Hwang		2
235	Mikael Wikström		2
236	Mike Long		2
237	Andres Ortega Montero		2
238	Ryou Ogura		2
239	Kazuya Hirabayashi		2
240	Bjørn Jocumsen		2
241	Victor Van den Broek		2
242	William Jensen		2
243	Stuart Cresswell		2
244	Richard Hoaen		2
245	Marco Blume		2
246	Adam Bernstein		2
247	Nicolai Herzog		2
248	Jon Finkel		2
249	Matthew Ham		2
250	Ivan La Ragione		2
251	Uli Hoenle		2
252	Chikara Nakajima		2
253	Seiji Kawakami		2
254	Ikumi Ebina		2
255	Christoph Hölzl		2
256	Torben Twiefel		2
257	Tom van de Logt		2
258	Paco Llopis		2
259	Peter Bero		2
260	Jason Barker		2
261	Chad Ellis		2
262	Franck Canu		2
263	Guy Brew		2
264	Michiel Horemans		2
265	Jian Liang Lim		2
266	Noah Boeken		2
267	Philip Freneau		2
268	Dusty Updike		2
269	Matt Linde		2
270	Jonathan Job		2
271	John Milliken		2
272	Akihisa Suzuki		2
273	Cedric Gaaloul		2
274	Omar Alvarez Leoni		2
275	Peter Leiher		2
276	Trevor Blackwell		2
277	Bertrand Viel		2

Player of the Year Race

through Pro Tour–Osaka (March 17, 2002)

Rank	Name	Home Country	Points
1	Kai Budde	Germany	90
2	Jens Thoren	Sweden	58
3	Alex Shvartsman	United States	48
4	Olivier Ruel	France	45
5	Ken Ho	United States	43
6	Gabriel Nassif	France	42
7	Farid Meraghni	France	39
8	Dirk Baberowski	Germany	38
9	Marco Blume	Germany	37
10	Robert Dougherty	United States	36
11	Eric Froehlich	United States	35
12	Nicolas Olivieri	France	34
13	Tomi Walamies	Finland	34
14	Jelger Wiegersma	Netherlands	34
15	David Humpherys	United States	33
16	Ben Rubin	United States	30
17	Brian Hegstad	United States	28
18	Itaru Ishida	Japan	28
19	Amiel Tenenbaum	France	28
20	Patrick Mello	Germany	27
21	Kamiel Cornelissen	Netherlands	26
22	Brian Kibler	United States	26
23	Zvi Mowshowitz	United States	26
24	Jeff Cunningham	Canada	25
25	Brian Davis	United States	25
26	Tsuyoshi Fujita	Japan	25
27	Justin Gary	United States	25
28	Eugene Harvey	United States	25
29	Darwin Kastle	United States	25
30	Daniel Clegg	United States	24
31	Andrew Johnson	United States	24
32	Osyp Lebedowicz	United States	24
33	William Jensen	United States	23
34	Raphael Levy	France	23
35	Andrew Wolf	United States	23
36	Chris Benafel	United States	22
37	Franck Canu	France	22
38	Ryan Fuller	Canada	22
39	Anton Jonsson	Sweden	22
40	Gary Rush	United States	22
41	Scott McCord	United States	21
42	Brock Parker	United States	21
43	Michael Pustilnik	United States	21
44	Antoine Ruel	France	21
45	Michael Turian	United States	21
46	Alan Comer	United States	20
47	Andrew Cuneo	United States	20
48	Gary Wise	England	20

Rookie of the Year Race

through Pro Tour–Osaka (March 17, 2002)

Rank	Name	Home Country	Points
1	Farid Meraghni	France	39
2	Amiel Tenenbaum	France	28
3	Osyp Lebedowicz	United States	24
4	Shuuhei Nakamura	Japan	16
5	Gerard Fabiano	United States	14
6	Takayuki Nagaoka	Japan	14
7	Christophe Haim	France	13
8	David Kuykendall	United States	12
9	Nikolaj Wolkoff	Denmark	12
10	Giulio Barra	Italy	11
11	Gionata Dal Farra	Italy	10
12	Adam Lane	United States	10
13	Bryan Lyons	United States	10
14	Joshua Smith	United States	10
15	Benjamin Caumes	France	9
16	Stephan Meyer	Germany	9
17	Arjan van Leeuwen	Netherlands	9
18	Kazuaki Arahori	Japan	8
19	Louis Boileau	Canada	8
20	Matias Gabrenja	Argentina	8
21	Josh Ravitz	United States	8
22	David Rood	Canada	8
23	Geoffrey Siron	Belgium	8
24	Pang Ming Wee	Malaysia	8
25	Johan Backfjärd	Sweden	7
26	John Balla	United States	7
27	Reinhard Blech	Germany	7
28	Shinsuke Hayashi	Japan	7
29	Jesse Karppinen	Finland	7
30	Michal Marcik	Czech Republic	7
31	Mitchell Tamblyn	United States	7
32	Kaare Anderson	United States	6
33	David Beduzzi	Italy	6
34	Richard Johnston	Australia	6
35	Wagner Kruger	South Africa	6
36	Svante Landgraf	Sweden	6
37	Anthony Menzer	United States	6
38	Yuuki Murakami	Japan	6
39	Jorge Rodriguez Menzel	Chile	6
40	Christopher Soots	United States	6
41	Andrew Stephens	South Africa	6
42	Kouhei Yamadaya	Japan	6

Tournament Manager	Head Judge	Scorekeeper	Judge Certification
Jeff Donais (5)	Collin Jackson (4)	Adrian Teh (3)	Kazuhiro Wakatsuki (3)

Judges

Akio Sugaya (3)	Damien Guillemard (2)	Matthias Nagy (3)
Atsushi Uotsu (2)	Kaoru "Pao" Yonemura (2)	Rune Horvik (4)
Ben Martin (3)	Keith Anderson (3)	Takeshi Miyasaki (2)
Bernd Keller (3)	Mark Rosewater (4)	Wearn Chong (3)
Chris Williams (2)	Masayuki Kunimitsu (3)	Yoshiya Shindo (2)

Osaka Masters

Eight Teams Competed for $150,000

As Usual, Budde Takes Home the Top Prize

by Josh Bennett

The invitation list for the Osaka Masters was a who's who of talent. There were the great old-school teams. Norway's Outland, starring Bjorn Jocumsen, Nicolai Herzog, and Eivind Nitter has been around for a long time, but not quite as long as Your Move Games (YMG). The 1999 Pro Tour–Washington D.C. champions, boasting a roster of Darwin Kastle, Dave Humpherys, and Rob Dougherty, have consistently shown their abilities in both team and individual competition. Then there was the new blood: Les Plus Class. Having come out of nowhere only to fall in the final of Pro Tour–New York last year, Gabriel Nassif, Nicolas Olivieri, and Amiel Tenenbaum were looking to prove they could do it again.

Also looking for a repeat or better was the Japanese powerhouse team Panzer Hunters. Headed by quiet mastermind Itaru Ishida and rounded out by Reiji Andou and Kazuyuko Momose, Panzer Hunters surprised the world at the Pro Tour–Tokyo Masters last year. They were giant killers, upsetting some of the best teams in the field before losing to ABU in the final. This year, once again on home soil, they aimed to bring home the gold. Momose had even retired from the **Magic** game, but was persuaded to come back for another run at the title. Other strong teams included Star-Maker.nl/lap, with Jelger Wiegersma, Victor van der Broek, and Frank Karsten, and New York's own Slay-Pillage-Massacre, with Scott McCord, Eric Ziegler, and Jon Sonne.

Last but certainly not least was Phoenix Foundation. It just wouldn't be a team event without the champions of 2001 Pro Tour–New York. Composed of the winningest man in **Magic**, Kai Budde, and his two shaven-headed enforcers, Dirk Baberowski and Marco Blume, Phoenix Foundation was the odds-on favorite to win the whole thing. And with Budde steering their drafts, the only thing between them and victory was Budde's uncanny inability to put up a "W" when it comes to Masters competition. Sure, put him in a Pro Tour event and he'll tap dance to a title, but that ability has seemed to evaporate in the face of non-Sunday competition. Luckily, Baberowski and Blume were both well equipped to carry him.

And as strong a list of teams as that is, still more giants of the game were waiting in the Gateway tournament. A late submission of tournament results denied New York semifinalists Illuminati (Justin Gary, Alex Shvartsman, and Zvi Mowshowitz) their ratings-based invitation and forced them to run the Gateway gauntlet. Joining them were the "New ABU," CCGHouse.com (Phil Freneau, Brian Hegstad, and Peter Szigeti), those loveable slackers Antarctica (Jon Finkel, Steve O'Mahoney-Shwartz, and Dan O'Mahoney-Shwartz), and Metagames (Wilfried Ranque, Raphael Levy, and Franck Canu), who spent New York under the shadow of their compatriots Les Plus Class. The suspension of Ryan Fuller had left last year's champions, Team AlphaBetaUnlimited.com, unable to compete.

Unlike last year, however, many of the teams that met the ratings bar for the Gateway did not compete because their members had no other reason to make the jaunt to Osaka. As a result, only eleven teams turned out to vie for the last spot. In addition to those mentioned above, the Gateway contingent included five Japanese teams (featuring luminaries such as Tsuyoshi Fujita, Masayuki Higashino, and Masahiko Morita), Singapore's Slaughter House (Nick Wong, Albertus Law, and Kelvin Hoon), and Outland's "B" team (Lovre Crnobori, Øyvind Ødegaard, and Endre Skjetne).

The five highest-rated teams were awarded byes, which left four Japanese teams, Antarctica, and Outland 2. The first three rounds were Sealed Deck, followed by Booster Draft in the final round. Three Japanese teams were quickly eliminated. In the next round, Antarctica and Outland 2 squared off. After a 1-1 match split, Finkel and Ødegaard were left to decide the winner. They had each won a game, and with time running out on the round, Finkel sided in all his least-expensive creatures, planning to win on life totals when the extra turns ran out. It looked like

Back: Your Move Games, Slay-Pillage-Massacre, Star-Maker, Phoenix Foundation Front: Les Plus Class, Metagames, Panzer Hunters, Outland

it was going his way, with an early hit from Escape Artist and Teroh's Faithful to bump his life up. But with his two remaining extra turns, Ødegaard played two Faithful's back-to-back to take the match for Outland 2.

Meanwhile, CCGHouse.com had bested Slaughter House in a knock-down, drag-out battle of the Houses. Unlucky's (Osamu Fujita, Ayumi Hidaka, and Takayuki Nagaoka) pulled off the big upset when they dispatched Illuminati, and Metagames took out Nagoyan (Ryouma Shiozu, Ryou Ogura, and Kouji Nose). Unlucky's then were bested by CCGHouse.com. Metagames and Outland 2 split their first two matches, and Outland 2 looked to Ødegaard to perform another miracle. Unfortunately, he was down a game and in a losing position. Metagames advanced.

The final draft went fairly smoothly, but it was clear that Metagames had opened stronger cards. Nowhere was this more apparent than a pack that gave them both Kamahl, Pit Fighter *and* Overrun. Nevertheless, CCGHouse.com were confident they could take it. Levy stopped Szigeti's offense cold in the B seat, but Hegstad walked over Ranque to even it at 1-1. It all came down to the Canu-Freneau match, and Freneau was down a game. Freneau Mutilated and put up a strong defense, but Canu had Whispering Shade. Metagames was in the Masters.

The Masters quickly got underway. The last match to finish was the YMG–Panzer Hunters thriller. Dougherty smashed Momose in two games, and Ishida evened things up by taking Humpherys downtown. That left Kastle and Andou.

In their third game, Andou had managed to shut down Cabal Torturer with Crippling Fatigue, only to find himself faced with Stalking Bloodsucker. Andou played Screams of the Damned. Kastle Firebolted Andou's blocker, then played Churning Eddy on his other creature, an Aquamoeba. Unfortunately, that left him without mana to protect the Bloodsucker from Andou's Fatigue and Screams. From there, it just went downhill. Kastle Butchered Andou's Skywing Aven, only to lose his Butcher to the Screams. Andou then attacked Kastle to 3 and Soul Scourged him out. Kastle never even got to play the Persuasion that had been in his hand the whole time.

Meanwhile, the Dutch had taken down Metagames, and both Phoenix Foundation and Les Plus Class had bested their opponents, Outland and Slay-Pillage-Massacre, respectively, setting up a Pro Tour–New York rematch in the semifinals. The Germans came out as the favorites from the draft, having opened significantly stronger cards, splitting their black and running red-black to take advantage of their *Torment* cards. The first match went to Tenenbaum after a Rites of Initiation whirlwind in the first game and a key Earth Rift in the second. Budde was not so easily defeated, as he came back from 1-1 against Nassif to give his team a fighting chance. Blume came through in the clutch against Olivieri, and Phoenix Foundation was in the final.

Star-Maker versus Panzer Hunters was even more exciting. In the third game of the Andou-Wiegersma match, Wiegersma chose to Last Rites away Andou's entire hand when his opponent had only Gravegouger on table, and he had Aven Fisher in hand. He then watched in horror as Andou drew five consecutive creatures to his five consecutive lands to take the match for Panzer Hunters. Van der Broek had already dropped a game in his match against Ishida to Demoralize, as their decks tended to play into stalemates. In the second game, it looked like van der Broek had every creature in his deck on the table. He went for the final blow, Deluging at the end of Ishida's turn, dropping Seton's Desire on a minor creature, and attacking all-out. But Ishida had Second Thoughts and a Beloved Chaplain enchanted with Ghostly Wings to stay alive at 2. The next turn, van der Broek swung again, and half of Ishida's defenders went to his graveyard. Ishida used his Broker and two Looters to mill van der Broek for four, then untapped and did so again. Two cards remained in van der Broek's library. Ishida then played Cephalid Coliseum to put Panzer Hunters into the final.

So Panzer Hunters had their big chance: They were on the verge of surpassing their previous performance. For Budde, a Masters victory was one of the items remaining on his "to do" list. Already the two wins he'd earned had tripled his lifetime Masters match wins. And, of course, the final would take place on Sunday.

The draft was fairly even. Blume had two Butchers, but Andou could just up-and-win with Upheaval. Baberowski had Overrun, but Ishida had Deluge. Budde's blue-white deck seemed to have the edge over Momose's sluggish green-red build, but Momose did have an Overrun of his own, as well as Rites of Initiation. Neither team made any bold claims.

In a flash, Panzer Hunters were up a match. Andou had gone to the air with Gravegouger and Ghostly Wings in the first game, and Blume never found an answer. The second was just as academic when Blume kept a two-lander and failed to draw more. Then Budde dropped the first game to Momose, having drawn sixteen of his eighteen lands, just one action card short of winning. In the meantime, Baberowski had his board wrecked with Sickening Dreams and was also quickly down a game.

Phoenix Foundation does it again! Pro Tour–New York Champions Blume, Budde, and Baberowski.

The impossible had turned into the probable. All Panzer Hunters had to do was win one of four games. Phoenix Foundation were up against the wall. Budde's Masters curse seemed to be overpowering the whole team. What followed, however, illustrated that Phoenix Foundation should never be counted out. Budde's deck began to show its strength, coming down with Pilgrim of Virtue to stop a Demoralize-Lithatog volley and going over the top with Thought Devourer to even the match. Meanwhile, Baberowski had come out with a quick start, and a sideboarded Embolden made sure he'd survive. Ishida reset the board with Sickening Dreams, but Baberowski still had plenty of gas left, winning in short order.

Budde cheered his teammate's victory before turning back to the task at hand. He started off with twin Cephalid Scouts and a Mystic Visionary. Momose held back on his Firebolt, aiming to decimate with Chainflinger. Budde triumphantly turned over Stupefying Touch for the save. Momose hastily built himself an army while Budde dug for better creatures. Soon the Devourer made an appearance, and Momose was in a bind. He swung with Rabid Elephant, holding Overrun and Rites of Initiation in preparation for the next turn. Budde untapped, dropped Momose to 1, and put Kirtar's Desire on the Elephant. Momose was now unable to win, and extended his hand.

The fate of both teams now rested on a single game. Baberowski blazed out of the gates, as his deck was designed to do. Ishida worked to stabilize, but Nantuko Disciple made that nearly impossible. Ishida was forced to Sickening Dreams in desperation, putting himself to 1, and Baberowski just dumped a horde of creatures on the board. Thus, the Osaka Masters title went to Phoenix Foundation, where so many assumed it would end up, further adding to the myth of Kai Budde.

Farid Wins One for France!

His Strategy: Draft the Monsters

by Josh Bennett

People approached Pro Tour–San Diego with equal parts trepidation and excitement. On one hand, many were sad to see one of the Tour's oldest stops moved from its old home aboard *The Queen Mary,* worried that San Diego wouldn't be able to match the ship's grandeur and history. On the other, many players were eager to show their stuff in what they thought was one of the most skill-testing Limited sets to date: *Odyssey.*

There was a lot of discussion about the best archetypes to draft in all-*Odyssey* Rochester Draft. Some saw it in simplistic terms: If you want to win, you need to play red-green, or blue with either black or white. Anything else is unplayable save in extreme circumstances. But that view was not widely held. In fact, though most agreed that there were about five viable color combinations, there was little consensus about what was unplayable. Many pointed to red-blue and red-white as decks they would never draft, but Dirk Baberowski and Zvi Mowshowitz both managed to go 4-0 in their first drafts using those combinations.

At the end of Day 1, it seemed like a fantastic reversal was taking place. Both Kai Budde and Jon Finkel had barely cobbled together the necessary 4-2-1 records to advance, both managing last-ditch victories in the seventh round. At the same time, fourteen-year-old Mitchell Tamblyn posted a respectable 5-2 record. At one point he was 5-0—before being cut down in a feature match against Kamiel "The Glacier" Cornelissen.

Cornelissen finished the day undefeated, an honor he shared with Sweden's Jens Thoren. The top table for Day 2 was rounded out by luminaries such as **Magic** Invitational Finalist Dan Clegg, Pro Tour–New York Champion Dirk Baberowski, Pro Tour–New York finalist Gabriel Nassif, and Latin America Champion Scott Richards.

Of course, not everyone had a gala day. Perennial Invitationalists Dave Price and Chris Pikula dropped their first three matches for early Day 1 exits. Also notably absent from the 112 who advanced were Grand Prix–Atlanta Champion Eugene Harvey and New Orleans Masters Series finalist Chris Benafel.

Day 2 got underway with everyone buckling down for tighter competition. The drafts did their work, and soon there were eight who stood above the rest. But poor Kamiel Cornelissen—the Dutch Wonder and Slow-Motion Master took his 7-0 Day 1 and threw it directly in the garbage, completing the full reversal by posting a 0-7 record on Day 2. The final blow was dealt by none other than Zvi Mowshowitz.

Also on the receiving end of a bad beat was Japan's Jin Okamoto, though his was somewhat less brutal. After beating Arto Hiltunen in the final round, the APAC champion was shocked to find that his 32 points had gotten him an ignominious ninth-place finish, as he lost the eighth spot on tiebreakers to old-timer Andrew Wolf. Fortunately, Okamoto can wipe away the tears with his $6,000 check.

The most shocking thing about the Top 8 was the relative obscurity of its members. After so much Budde-dominance, it was shocking to see so few known faces. Only Frederico Bastos and Wolf had been to Day 3 before, and Wolf's was four years ago! For their lack of accolades, however, the Top 8 was quite a strong group.

Both Neil Reeves of Arkansas and Farid Meraghni of France came into the Top 8 virtually unknown. Meraghni took up the cards just two years ago, and in that time played in 270 DCI-sanctioned drafts, making him one of the most active players in the game. Reeves is a Tour player, but has stayed out of the public eye with 33rd- and 34th-place finishes over the last year. Both are known only to a select few, but have high-profile advocates: Reeves is praised by former Player of the Year Bob Maher, and Invitationalist Antoine Ruel calls Meraghni "The Next Big Thing."

Representing the IRC channel **#wisedraft** were Eric Froehlich and Jens Thoren. There they train with some of the best, like Budde, Mowshowitz, Patrick Mello, Tomi Walamies, and Tommi Hovi. They stood in evidence that preparation pays dividends. Also enjoying a breakout performance was Canada's Jeff Cunningham, whose Top 8 crowned a pair of previous Top 32 finishes.

The most lettered men at the final table were Wolf and Bastos, the old and the new, respectively. While Wolf hasn't tasted success for some time, Bastos only just stepped out of the Pro Tour–Tokyo spotlight. In addition, Bastos is a former Portuguese national champion, while Wolf is a long-time friend of Team Deadguy.

left to right: Cunningham, Wolf, Bastos, Reeves, Froehlich, Gallitz, Thoren, Meraghni

But of all the players to make the Top 8, none were so celebrated as Don Gallitz. A six-year veteran of the Tour, Gallitz had the dubious honor of having the most lifetime pro points with no Top 8 to show for it. He even had to fight for his berth to the end, squaring off against France's Meraghni, who had already secured his spot. When Meraghni extended his hand in defeat, the crowd who had watched Gallitz's match in silent anticipation erupted in cheers and applause: after so long, vindication.

It was a good weekend for the Canadians overall. In addition to Cunningham's Top 8, they put up a number of strong finishes. Ex-Canadian-

$200,000 was on the line for these drafts.

turned-Englishman Gary Wise put a pie in the face of his detractors by placing 12th overall, a finish that allowed him to remain on the "Gravy Train." Ryan Fuller took 13th, followed by the venerable Terry Tsang at 15th and Jeff Fung, hot on the comeback trail, at 17th.

Day 3 started with the Top 8 competitors sitting down for the final draft. The color lines were drawn early, with Cunningham and Wolf getting cut off hard from the right. Froehlich and Meraghni seemed to be in the best spots, as both got quality late picks. There was no shortage of bombs at the table, with Overruns going to Thoren and Wolf, and Meraghni scoring both Savage Firecat and Kamahl, Pit Fighter!

Perhaps the most anticipated of Day 3's events happened away from the harsh lights and cameras. Following Phoenix Foundation's victory at Pro Tour–New York and the hubbub over Kai Budde, noted curmudgeon Pro Tour mainstay Eric Taylor had vowed that Budde would not win New Orleans, going so far as to promise to eat his hat should Budde prove him wrong.

Well, Budde did. And Taylor is a man of his word. Armed with scissors and ketchup, he dismantled a very inedible black fedora and started forcing down slices. New Orleans finalist Tomi Walamies happened to amble past as Taylor was working on his third helping, and Walamies simply said to Taylor, "Sorry, he drew the Morphling."

Still more savagery was going on in the Feature Match Area. **Magic** creator Richard Garfield was setting up to do combat with none other than Jon Finkel. They were playing *Ice Age–Alliances* Constructed, but under harsh restrictions: no more than four unique rares, no more than twelve uncommons, and no more than two of any card except basic land. A number of power cards, like Kjeldoran Outpost, were banned.

Finkel was confident, and Garfield knew that he had, at best, an outside shot at success. In the first game, it soon became apparent that Finkel's deckbuilding and play skills outmatched Garfield's. Finkel's victory in the second game was less than satisfying, with a turn-four Balduvian Horde dispatching a mana-screwed Garfield.

Then it was time for quarterfinals action. Reeves squared off against Meraghni. While the draft had been unkind to Reeves, Meraghni had scored quality beatdown creatures to keep things going until his bombs showed up. Reeves took game 2 thanks to Meraghni's mana screw, but otherwise was simply outgunned.

Meanwhile, Cunningham faced Wolf. Both were somewhat short on quality cards, but that was good news to Wolf's aggressive red-green build. His early pressure, helped by a turn-two Wild Mongrel each game, was enough to claim victory. Wolf took the match in three games.

Bastos and Gallitz's match went the full five games. In the final game, Gallitz was forced to mulligan, and thought he was being knocked out. It turned out, however, that Bastos was short on creatures. He hit five mana and still made no play for three turns. That gave Gallitz ample time to assemble a force. Bastos started to rally, but it was too late. The crowd went wild as Gallitz played Æther Burst to force through the final points of damage.

Froehlich and Thoren also split their first four games, with Froehlich getting Chamber of Manipulation and Animal Boneyard for games 2 and 3, and Thoren marching over with Overrun in the others. Thoren started with an early advantage in the final game, but things quickly began to stall for him. Froehlich looked to take the upper hand with Shadowmage Infiltrator and tapped low to play it. With the threat of Second Thoughts removed, Thoren untapped and took it with Overrun.

Thoren was happy to face Wolf in the semifinals. His control deck was well suited to fend off Wolf's attacks because of his many combat tricks. Embolden was particularly key, as it allowed him to stave off Wolf's burn. Thoren advanced effortlessly.

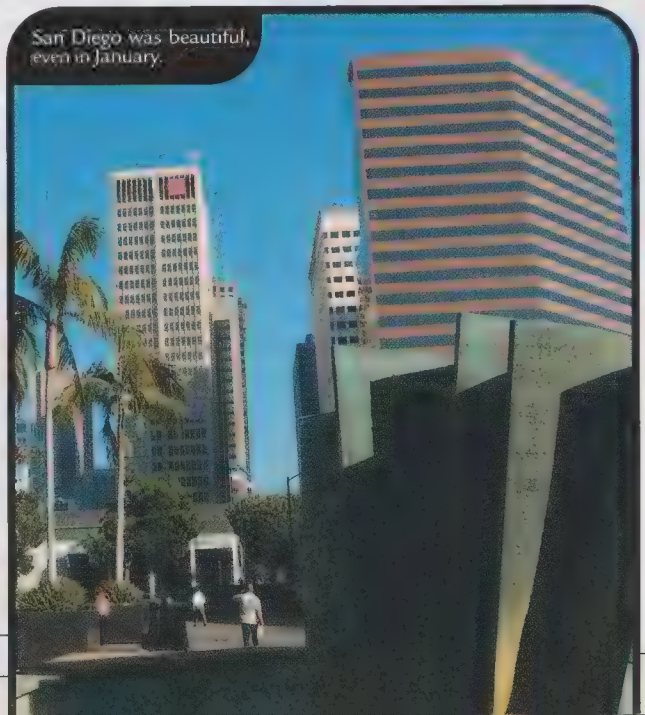
Meanwhile Gallitz's run was coming to an end at the hands of Meraghni. A six-land opening hand left him mana flooded, and when he started to race in the second game, Meraghni pulled Savage Firecat. When Meraghni dropped a turn-three Spellbane Centaur, Gallitz had to step up to the camera and show the crowd the pair of Æther Bursts he was holding. When Meraghni finished him off, Gallitz bought the Centaur from him for $10 and stepped out of the play area to incinerate it.

That put Thoren and Meraghni in the final. Interestingly, Meraghni had predicted that he would win his first two matches before falling to Wolf or Thoren. In the first game, Savage Firecat led an army of fat that buried the Swede. In the second, Thoren put up a strong defensive wall and let his Leaf Dancer do all the work.

Thoren couldn't duplicate that feat in the third game, however, and was in danger of losing the championship. French well-wishers watched from every angle, eager to see Meraghni bring it home. When the fourth game stalemated, it seemed like it was slipping away. Meraghni tried an all-out attack, but it was not to be. Again, the Leaf Dancer dealt the final blow.

Afterwards, Meraghni realized that he had thrown the game away by miscalculating the effect of his Rites of Initiation. He tried to keep it from rattling him. The fifth game looked good for Meraghni as soon as Kamahl hit play, but Thoren wouldn't give up. He kept a Thaumatog and Patrol Hound alive with Embolden tricks and then tried to Overrun. But Meraghni was too savage. First he played Elephant Ambush and blocked, and after Thoren had blown up his land to push through for the win, Meraghni showed him Moment's Peace.

And so it was that Farid Meraghni, the unknown, walked away from San Diego a champion. While his **Magic** résumé may not be as prestigious as Budde's, his performance is just one more illustration that hard work and dedication can bring about great results.



San Diego was beautiful, even in January.

Top 8 Profiles

by Aaron Forsythe

Farid Meraghni

If practice makes perfect, then Farid Meraghni must be at the pinnacle of **Magic** perfection. The young French student had never played a DCI-sanctioned **Magic** match before January 2000, but since then he's played more than any person alive. His record of over 270 DCI-sanctioned drafts and over 1,000 matches over the past two years may raise some eyebrows on this side of the Atlantic, but trustworthy French sources, such as pro player Nicholas Labarre and scorekeeper Cajus von Engelmann, will testify that it *is* possible to play that much **Magic**, and that Meraghni has done it.

All this gaming takes place at the Ostelen Game Center in Paris, France, where other French notables, including Antoine and Olivier Ruel, Franck Canu, Amiel Tenenbaum, Gabriel Nassif, and Nicolas Olivieri, frequently join Meraghni. The center holds DCI-sanctioned drafts just about every day, and on weekends it's not unusual to see 100 people there playing **Magic** and other popular games.

With such a rigorous regimen, it's no surprise that Meraghni has made a lot of noise in a short time on the Pro Tour, finishing tenth in New York as a member of Team Paris and then winning San Diego, his first individual Tour. The victory puts Meraghni solidly into first in the Rookie of the Year race, ahead of his countryman, Tenenbaum.

Meraghni rose to the top of the San Diego standings by knowing when to draft using the widely accepted "rules" and when to break them. He generally stuck to trusted archetypes, but his savvy shined through on two occasions near the tournament's end. In the draft prior to round 12, he was seated next to Neil Reeves. Meraghni had consulted the standings prior to the draft and knew he'd be up against Reeves with the Top 8 on the line. So, when he switched from blue-white into green in the second set of packs, it might have looked like insanity to spectators, but it was a calculated maneuver specifically meant to weaken Reeves's deck. Meraghni made a similar unorthodox decision in the Top 8 draft on Sunday, first-picking a Cephalid Looter in the middle of the proceedings, even though he had a solid red-green deck on his hands. But the Looter, which he ended up splashing, helped him beat Jens Thoren in the final.

It is little details such as these that have the French **Magic** community touting Meraghni as the "Next Big Thing," and if the beginning of this season has been any indication, they're right.

Jens Thoren

Like Farid Meraghni, Sweden's Jens Thoren owes his success in San Diego to amazing amounts of practice. But unlike Meraghni, not all of Thoren's practice has been face-to-face play. Sure, he is part of an impressive Scandinavian team—Punisher, which features Anton Jonsson, Tomi Walamies, Mattias Kettil, and several other name players from the region—but Thoren spent the weeks leading up to San Diego drafting online cards as part of the beta test for ***Magic** Online*. Not only did the game provide him with the opportunity to practice at any time, but it also allowed him to do so against some of the game's finest players, including Gary Wise and Kai Budde.

The quiet twenty-two-year-old hadn't built much of a résumé prior to San Diego—a few decent Grand Prix finishes and a Top 8 at the European Championship were the highlights—but his reputation preceded him. Coming into the event, many Europeans named Thoren as the **Magic** game's most underrated player—and he showed why.

After putting up ten wins and two draws over fourteen Swiss rounds, a record good enough for the fifth seed, Thoren masterfully drafted a green-white deck in the Top 8—momentous because green-white is generally shunned. He splashed one black card, Last Rites, that paid off in his first-round match against Eric Froehlich. With no cards left in his library and the board littered with creatures, Thoren played Last Rites and forced Froehlich to discard *three* Second Thoughts, which allowed the Swede to Overrun for the win.

Thoren's green creatures and combat tricks were too much for Andrew Wolf in the semifinals, setting the stage for an all-European final match against Meraghni. While many of the top pros predicted that Thoren would win, it was not to be, as green-white's lack of removal left Thoren with no answer to Meraghni's Kamahl, Pit Fighter. Second place would have to suffice for the Swede. Thoren's days of being underrated are probably over.

Don Gallitz

Every Pro Tour event has at least one feel-good story, and San Diego's headliner has to be the vindication of Don Gallitz's **Magic** career.

Gallitz had been languishing on the Pro Tour for the better part of six years and was just about ready to hang it up. Over the course of his long tenure, he'd picked up a drawer full of T-shirts and a nice stack of pro points, but never a Top 8 finish. As a member of the influential team Tongo Nation, he put up consecutive Top 16 finishes back during the heyday of Jakub Slemr and Terry Borer, but never got any closer to the crown over dozens more attempts. The likeable Virginian made sure his swan song was a sweet one, however, drawing on every last ounce of ability, luck, and karma to finally secure a seat in Sunday's competition in San Diego.

While on stage in the semifinals against Farid Meraghni, Gallitz put on a show for his wife and friends in the crowd unlike any they'd seen before, even going so far as to change clothes between games. But his fortune ran out against the French wunderkind, forcing Gallitz to settle for third place. But Gallitz is not complaining—he got to take home a plaque and a large check that had been a long time coming, and, more importantly, he got to leave behind the monkey he'd been carrying around for six years. If he never plays another Pro Tour match, Gallitz can rest easy knowing that he finally earned his one moment in the spotlight.

Andrew Wolf

A select few players, such as David Price and Darwin Kastle, get to be Pro Tour "fixtures"—players who have been around for a long time and are a threat to put up a good finish in every tournament they play in. But for most people, life gives them a window in which **Magic** can be their top priority, and they have to make the best of it. Stars come and stars go. Budde and Mowshowitz will eventually be replaced, just as they replaced Mark Justice and Olle Råde as the pastime's peak performers.

Because of this constant turnover, it is a real treat when a name from the past of **Magic** resurfaces to do well again. Andrew Wolf is such a case. He finished eighth at 1998 Pro Tour–Los Angeles (the tournament made famous by David Price's monored *Tempest* deck) and recently regained his old form with an appearance in the final of Grand Prix–Minneapolis, which was followed up by this Top 4 in San Diego, giving him the record for longest lapse between Pro Tour Top 8s.

His recent resurgence is a testament to Wolf's love of the game. Even through the lean years, he never stopped trying to qualify, and his drought actually helped him put the game into perspective. With a full-time job as a graphic designer, the twenty-eight-year-old Georgian's main reason for playing these days is one that tends to be forgotten amid the high pressure and big money of the pro circuit: personal enjoyment. And if he enjoyed the game before, he's bound to enjoy it more now that he's at the top.

Jeff Cunningham

For some young players, the Junior Super Series (JSS) is a stepping-stone on their way to the Pro Tour. Every year, a few new faces make the leap effortlessly, using past JSS success as a springboard for promising careers in the big time. Such is the story of Jeff Cunningham, an eighteen-year-old film student at York University in Toronto.

Cunningham's initial breakout was a Top 8 finish at Canadian Nationals as a youngster, barely missing making the Canadian national team. But by keeping his amateur status, Cunningham was able to play in JSS Worlds that year, where he finished 11th. After that, Cunningham tried his hand at the Pro Tour and did well, finishing 30th at Chicago that same year. It took a while for him to repeat that performance, garnering another Top 32 last season in Barcelona, but with his Top 8 in San Diego, he seems to have arrived for good.

When not in school, Cunningham lives in Vancouver, surrounded by top Canadian talent like Jeff Fung, Terry Tsang, and Terry Lau. Lau finished 48th at San Diego, and the other two came in 17th and 15th, respectively planting the seed that Canada's westernmost metropolis might finally be an emerging hotbed of **Magic** skill.

Cunningham's personal strategy in San Diego was simple: draft the colors he felt were the most complimentary in *Odyssey* Limited: blue and black. In all five of the weekend's Rochester Drafts, Cunningham did just that. And it worked, vaulting him into the Top 8 where he finally met defeat at the hands of Andrew Wolf and Overrun.

Frederico Bastos

When Frederico Bastos, a veteran of one Pro Tour Top 8 (Tokyo), returned to Sunday competition in San Diego, he didn't expect to be the player with the most Top 8 experience of the bunch (tied with Andrew Wolf at one apiece). But it suited him just fine. While the twenty-four-year-old won't come out and say that he is Portugal's best player, the truth is that none of his compatriots have ever played in a Pro Tour Top 8 even once, let alone twice. When asked about the caliber of his performance over the weekend, he deferred to his playgroup back home, which includes all the best players in Portugal. It is no surprise that one of its members has enjoyed success on an international level.

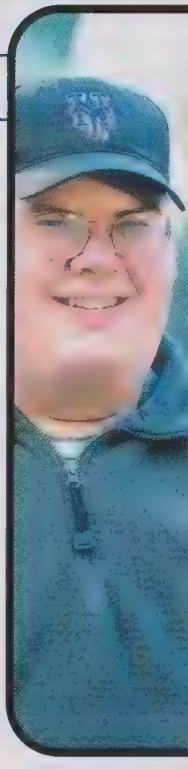
Bastos's strategy on the weekend revolved mainly around one card—Overrun. He drafted red-green four times out of five and often had the green sorcery at his disposal. Most noteworthy was his decision to switch into red-green in the Top 8 draft right behind Andrew Wolf, who was drafting the same colors . . . simply because he opened Overrun. "You have to," the Portuguese said, citing the card as potentially the best game-breaker in the entire format. Unfortunately for Bastos, even Overrun wasn't enough to get him past Don Gallitz in the quarterfinals.

Neil Reeves

Arkansas's Neil Reeves was a two-time All-State selection in both football and baseball in high school, and he's brought his competitive intensity to the **Magic** game. "When I started playing this game," said the twenty-three-year-old, "I knew I wanted to be the best at it, too."

His road to the top has been a tough one, however, considering that Little Rock, Arkansas, is a difficult place to find pro-level competition. "There's no group of local pros, no big teams, nothing," he said. So he did the best he could, putting in hours at a game center and making the Pro Tour Qualifier rounds throughout the South.

His skill was soon evident, as he qualified for several Pro Tour events and even the New Orleans Masters Series on rating. Back then, people were wondering who he was and if he was worthy of the prize money, but now all their questions have been put to rest. Arkansas has produced the real deal, and his name is Neil Reeves.



Eric Froehlich

Rarely do two people from the same town make the same Pro Tour Top 8, but even more rare is the case where the two seldomly, if ever, practice together, both getting to the final dance totally separate from each other. Such is the story of Don Gallitz and Eric Froehlich, both residents of Springfield, Virginia, a suburb of Washington, D.C. While it is uncertain where Gallitz got his practice for the event, Froehlich turned to ***Magic*** *Online* and the **#wisedraft** channel on IRC.

The **#wisedraft** channel hosts many of the world's best drafters; they get together in the virtual world to practice and discuss strategy. Included in the group with Froehlich are Jens Thoren, **Magic** monarch Kai Budde, Zvi Mowshowitz, Scott Johns, and many others, including the channel's namesake, Gary Wise. With that much brainpower working toward a common goal, good things are bound to happen.

Froehlich made the Top 16 at 2001 Pro Tour–Los Angeles, but his name was thrust into the spotlight when bigwigs Kyle Rose and Kamiel Cornelissen chose him to be their third for the team Pro Tour season. Froehlich did not disappoint, helping "A Little Too Sick" to a seventh-place finish. Froehlich finished in the money in New Orleans, and now with this Top 8 in San Diego, he has proved himself to be part of the game's new generation of luminaries.

San Diego Final Standings

Rank	Name	Pro Points
1	Farid Meraghni	32
	Jens Thoren	24
	Donald Gallitz	
	Andrew Wolf	
	Jeff Cunningham	
	Frederico Bastos	
	Neil Reeves	
	Eric Froehlich	
	Jin Okamoto	
	Dirk Baberowski	
	Giulio Barra	
	Gary Wise	
	Ryan Fuller	
	Gionata Dal Farra	
	Terry Tsang	
	Tommi Hovi	
	Jeff Fung	
	Justin Gary	
	Antonino De Rosa	
	Glen Littlefield	
	Arto Hiltunen	
	Daniel Clegg	
	Nicolai Herzog	
	Justin Polin	
	Marc Tschirch	
	Jeroen Remie	
	Ben Rubin	
	William Jensen	
	Olivier Ruel	
	Amiel Tenenbaum	
	Scott McCord	
	Tom van de Logt	
	Reinhard Blech	
	Dan Burdick	
	Zvi Mowshowitz	
	Osyp Lebedowicz	
	Christopher Manning	
	Scott Richards	
	Franck Canu	
	Robert Dougherty	
	Federico Dato	
	Pang Ming Wee	
	Egon Holdhus	
	Alex Shvartsman	
	Alan Comer	
	Joseph Crosby	
	Yun Bagashev	
	Terry Lau	
	Bob Maher Jr.	
	Raphael Levy	
	Andrea Santin	
	David Rood	
	Matthew Ranks	
54	Thomas Guevin	
	Brian Kibler	
	Paavo Sissala	
	Michael Turian	
	Øyvind Ødegaard	
	Stewart Shinkins	
	Robert Swarowski	
	Svend Geertsen	
	Carlos Barrado	
	Patrick Mello	
	Reiji Ando	
	Noah Weil	
	Gabriel Nassif	
	Gabriel Tsang	
	Andrea Dato	
	John Ormerod	
	James Halter	
71	David Humphreys	3
72	Tim Danziger	
73	Christoph Lippert	
74	Justin West	
75	Sam Fog	
76	Helmut Summersberger	
77	Kai Budde	
78	Chen Yu Weng	
79	Joost Vollebregt	
80	Takao Higaki	
81	Noah Boeken	
82	Sean Bulthaup	
83	Ben Stark	
84	Tiago Chan	
85	Stuart Kovinsky	
86	Marco Blume	
87	Abraham Snepvangers	
88	Sunao Ueda	
89	Kamiel Cornelissen	
90	Mitchell Tamblyn	
91	Ben Stoll	
92	Marcus Angelin	
93	Chase Keaten	
94	Danny Mandel	
95	Stephan Meyer	
96	Karl Schmidt	
97	Osmond Chen	
98	Kurtis Hahn	
99	Rick Chong	
100	Kazuya Hirabayashi	
101	Ben Seck	
102	Scott Molasky	
103	Doug Tice	
104	Louis Boileau	
105	Michael Chiumento	
106	Itaru Ishida	
107	Jim Braatz	
108	René Pech	
109	Bruce Cowley	
110	Dan Bishop	
111	Tristan Davenport	
112	Jon Finkel	
113	Piotr Widuch	
114	Eric Kesselman	
115	Jon Stern	
116	André Delere	
117	Masahiko Morita	
118	Oliver Steiger	
119	Frank Gilson	
120	Antoine Ruel	
121	Richard Hoaen	
122	Adrian Sayers	
123	Steven OMS	
124	Francisco Barboza	
125	Patrick Chapin	
126	Pierre Malherbaud	
127	Eugene Harvey	
128	Paul Grasshoff	
129	Stuart Wright	
130	Roman Weidemann	
131	Holger Meinecke	
132	Kentaro Yuasa	
133	Francisco Gonzalez	
134	Tony Tsai	
135	Daniel Ohlmann	
136	David Ball	
137	Trent Boneau	
138	Wielfried Ranque	
139	Charles Payne	
140	Matt Sperling	
141	Adam Prokopin	2
142	Rickard Osterberg	
143	Ron Kotwica	
144	Paul Pakis	
145	Paul Sottosanti	
146	Pavel Matousek	
147	Sol Malka	
148	Isaac Haxton	
149	Alan Henderson	
150	Gary Krakower	
151	David Brucker	
152	Huei-Saint Shwe	
153	Michael Sung	
154	Brad Swan	
155	Jason Howden	
156	Shinsuke Hayashi	
157	Alex Smith	
158	Alex Borteh	
159	Eoin Brosnan	
160	Francis Cormier	
161	Randy Wright	
162	Murray Evans	
163	Erno Ekebom	
164	Yann Hamon	
165	Masayuki Higashino	
166	Ernst Schipper	
167	Craig Wescoe	
168	Robert Smink	
169	Yukihiro Sato	
170	Andreas Schraut	
171	Tomas Rosholm	
172	Chris Benafel	
173	Johan Assen	
174	Darwin Kastle	2
175	Julien Columb	2
176	Brian Faires	2
177	Hideo Takeda	2
178	Ryouma Shiozu	2
179	Tim Aten	2
180	Carlos Eduardo Romao	2
181	Andrew Johnson	2
182	Kyle Reid	2
183	Aleja Dominguez Ramos	2
184	Martin Scheuchenstuhl	2
185	Valentin Urziceanu	2
186	Tom Willoughby	2
187	Eivind Nitter	2
188	Scott Johns	2
189	Bin Chen	2
190	Kenny Hsiung	2
191	Benjamin Caumes	2
192	Gary Rush	2
193	Nick Little	2
194	Alexandre Riviere	2
195	Kiyoshi Sasanuma	2
196	Ken Ho	2
197	Gisle Salem	2
198	Thomas Kiene	2
199	Ped Bunsongsikul	2
200	Damian Brown-Santirso	2
201	Craig Jones	2
202	Tyler Morgan	2
203	Michael Sigrist	2
204	Alexander Witt	2
205	Sammy Batarseh	2
206	Eiho Kato	2
207	Matt Severa	2
208	Jason Webster	2
209	Matthew Harper	2
210	Bryce Currence	2
211	Brian Hacker	2
212	Peter Szigeti	
213	Matthew Frazier	
214	Matthew Vienneau	
215	Pieter Loubser	
216	Nicolas Bornarel	
217	Mike Hron	
218	Dario Minieri	
219	John Blanchard	
220	Jacob Rabinowitz	
221	Anthony Patronick	
222	Robbie Howell	
223	Roger Miller	
224	Jeffrey Magid	
225	Markus Joebstl	
226	Thorsten Vogelheim	
227	Michael Gurney	
228	Daniel OMS	
229	James Hustad	
230	Ferran Vila	
231	Stefan Meewes	
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238	Øystein Hasnes	
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245	Matthew Finn	
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248	Olivier Dickert	
249	Mathieu Bédard	
250	Haruyuki Neki	
251	Xavier Petit	
252	Momotarou Uchida	
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254	Bryan Hubble	
255	Katsuhiro Mori	
256	Roger Sorino	
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261	Jeiger Wiegersma	
262	Trevor Blackwell	
263	Tim McKenna	
264	Lee Steht	
265	Miguel Anth Gutierrez	
266	Jason Opalka	
267	Laurent Janiak	
268	Ryan Hoffman	
269	Jeremy Bright	
270	Cassiu Weathersby III	
271	Chad Ellis	
272	David Perez	
273	Bryan Lyons	
274	Geir Bakke	
275	Matteo Zappaterra	
276	Michael Mindes	
277	Aaron Moshiashwili	
278	Chris Pikula	
279	David Pope	
	Zach Karthauser	
281	Shuuhei Nakamura	2
	Steve Bartrop	
	Yuri Kolomeyko	
	Tadayoshi Komiya	
	Antonio Delgado	
	Giammana Muratori	
	Anthony McDonough	
	Jimmy Jarman	
	Peter Leiher	
	Alex Melnikow	
	Masanari Watanabe	
	Johan Sadeghpour	
	Andrew Stephens	
	Mauro Bongiovanni	
	Dan Cahir	
	Joao Duarte	
	Robert McKeon	
	Jan Tomcani	
	James Hollister	
	Gidi Aviram	
	Eric Taylor	
	Hughes Joneaux Sr.	
	Jun Nobusluta	
	Mariusz Gorniak	
	Akiyoshi Miura	
	Ammi Ribar	
	Maarten Fergusor	
	Brian Davis	
	Benedikt Klauser	
	Kurt Burgner	
	Nicolas Labarre	
	Matt Linde	
	Eduardo Lima	
	Michael Donovan	
	Gerald Camangor	
	Alessandro Betti	
	Adam Strong	
	Kevin Pettinger	
	Menno Rieff	
	Brett Shears	
	Wagner Kruger	
	Brian Hegstad	
323	Alex Bedell	
324	Genesis Garcia	
325	Jeremy Simmons	
326	Tomi Walamies	
327	Michael Rose	
328	Jamie Daley	
329	Benn El M Christensen	
330	Emanuele Fasci	
331	Anton Jonsson	
332	Christopher Wong	
333	Ben Rothman	
334	Tsuyoshi Fujita	
335	Damien Lefebvre	
336	Pedro de Diego	
337	Simon Hockwin	
338	Darryl E Tweedale	
339	Rob Nadebaum	
340	Matthew Stone	
341	Nicolas Olivier	
342	Philip Freneau	
343	Steven Shears	
344	Brock Parker	
345	Stan Van der Velden	
346	Andrew Klein	
347	Peter Guevin	

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Psychatog Dominates the Masters

Fuller Wins His Second Masters Title

by Toby Watcher

Over the years, the **Magic** game has developed a rich tournament history, and included in that history are certain memorable locations. The Pro Tour has reached different cities around the world, but one venue was a constant: "The Boat." *The Queen Mary*, located in Long Beach, CA, had hosted Pro Tour–Los Angeles every year since the Pro Tour began, and had become a place of great memories and moments for players. These memories include the near-riot that resulted when David Mills was disqualified in the final against Tommi Hovi for playing cards before tapping mana. Still, just as historic sports venues such as Boston Garden, Fenway Park, Cleveland Stadium, and Yankee Stadium have either been torn down or considered for demolition, The Boat also had its share of space problems. As a result, **Magic** was set to start a new chapter in its history as the west coast U.S. Pro Tour moved to San Diego.

Along with the main tournament, San Diego was also hosting its first Masters Series event. Players who helped to build the legacy of *The Queen Mary* years ago in Los Angeles could never have imagined the concept of a tournament series that guarantees every player at least $2,000. Indeed, getting into the Masters has become a major goal for most Pro Tour players. It motivates them to go to Grand Prix tournaments to earn a few more pro points and causes many lapsed players to come back to the game. The idea of getting a huge payout just for showing up, and having the opportunity to earn even more if you win, is far too alluring to pass up.

The format for the San Diego Masters tournament was Standard, which gave players from around the world a chance to see what the pros could do with the *Odyssey* set. The current Pro Tour season does not include a Standard Pro Tour, so aside from Worlds, San Diego was the only major tournament to highlight the format that most nonpros play the most. The Top 32 players in the world brought their best decks, setting the trend for new archetypes to bring to Friday Night **Magic** and other tournaments.

For fans of innovation, the San Diego Masters was certainly not a disappointment, as many new deck types emerged. A blue-white-green control deck designed by Brian Kibler, which uses Mystic Enforcer and a ton of cantrips to fill the graveyard, ensured that the powerful four-mana creature from *Odyssey* was a 6/6 "Dragon" more often than not. Dan Clegg and Ben Rubin lost with it in the first round, but Brian Hegstad made it to the Top 4, where he lost to eventual champion, Ryan Fuller. Another interesting deck type to emerge in the Masters was "Balancing Tings." This deck uses Balancing Act or Obliterate to clear the board, and floats mana to follow up with a huge Terravore. Rob Dougherty was the only player to run the deck in the Masters, and he finished in the Top 8.

Of course, no event is truly Standard without

Two of the many Psychatog decks met in the final.

Ryan Fuller is always controversial, but talented.

Ryan Fuller
- Psychatog -

4	Psychatog
4	Æther Burst
4	Counterspell
4	Fact or Fiction
2	Force Spike
1	Gainsay
4	Memory Lapse
4	Peek
4	Predict
3	Repulse
3	Undermine
4	Cephalid Coliseum
9	Island
4	Salt Marsh
2	Swamp
4	Underground River

sideboard

3	Disrupt
1	Divert
1	Force Spike
1	Gainsay
3	Hibernation
2	Lobotomy
4	Slay

red-green beatdown. Steve O'Mahoney-Schwartz (OMS) got into the Masters the hard way by winning the Gateway tournament, piloting his aggro machine to the Top 8. Tsuyoshi Fujita played a version that did not run the usual assortment of Birds and Elves for acceleration, which gave him more room for threats. He also ran Sylvan Might, a card that has not seen much Constructed play. It obviously worked quite well, as he also made it to the Top 8. Markus Bell and Roger Sorino also played threat-heavy green-red with no acceleration, but neither player made it past the first round.

This event was also the debut of a Battle of Wits deck in a high-level tournament, as Brock Parker reached the second round with his 244-card monstrosity. World Champion Tom van de Logt ran the only creatureless deck in the tournament, "Counter-Trenches," but lost in the first round to OMS's aggro-beatdown deck. A very interesting innovation to emerge was a French variant on "Snake-Tongue," which had a strong showing at States back when the *Odyssey* set first became legal for tournament play. Not only does the French version splash blue for Mystic Snake and red for Flametongue Kavu, but it also goes into white and black for a splash of the best cards they have to offer. White provides access to Mystic Enforcer, while black allows the deck to play Shadowmage Infiltrator. This deck is a throwback to Five-Color Green decks of old that ran the best cards in the environment, regardless of color. Frank Canu won two rounds with the deck before losing to Ryan Fuller.

Masters Top 8

Ryan Fuller	(Psychatog)	5-0
David Humpherys	(Psychatog)	4-1
Brian Hegstad	(Enforcer)	3-1
Tomi Walamies	(Psychatog)	3-1
Rob Dougherty	(Psychatog)	2-1
Tsuyoshi Fujita	(Red-Green Beatdown)	2-1
Darwin Kastle	(Red-Green Beatdown)	2-1
Steve OMS	(Red-Green Beatdown)	2-1

The real story of the tournament can be summed up by one card: Psychatog. The Upheaval–Zombie Infestation deck had seen a significant amount of play before the Masters, and many thought it was the best deck in the environment. Many of the players in the Masters took this concept and improved on it. While Zombie Infestation is a great card after Upheaval, it's practically a dead card otherwise because pitching two cards just to get one 2/2 creature is a poor investment. On the other hand, Psychatog is almost always a huge creature that can hold off attackers, especially when powered by blue's ability to fill up the graveyard with cards.

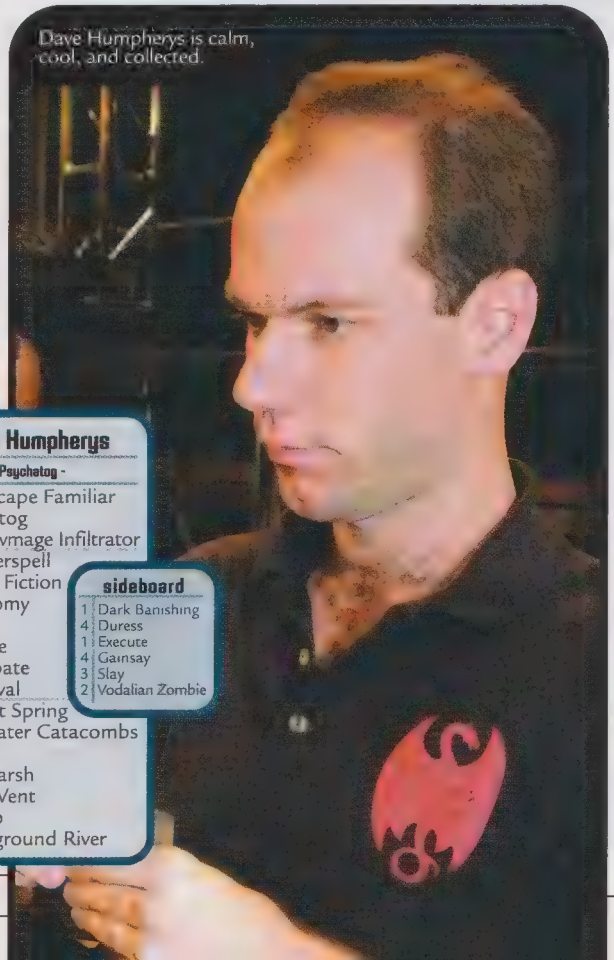
There were plenty of different variations on the Psychatog strategy present at San Diego. Some players stayed within the old Upheaval control configuration and kept plenty of permission spells, along with Shadowmage Infiltrator, in their decks. Some versions even ran Nightscape Familiar and Merfolk Looter. Other versions cut Upheaval altogether and played Psychatog as the only win condition. Ryan Fuller, who won the event and emerged $25,000 richer, played a version of the deck that was much more focused than usual. It contained a ton of cantrips, such as Opt, Peek, and even Predict, which Fuller could use on himself to get another card in the graveyard, or on his opponent after a Memory Lapse. By using all these cantrips, Fuller was able to cycle through his deck quickly and find what he needed, all while filling up his graveyard with a ton of Psychatog food. He even ran four Cephalid Coliseums to supplement this strategy. Besides having a ton of cycling power, Fuller's deck was also capable of clearing the way for a major Psychatog beating. His deck ran Repulse in addition to four copies of Æther Burst.

Not only did Fuller ride the black-blue Atog to victory, but others also found success with the strategy. Three of the four players in the Top 4 all ran versions of the deck, while Brian Hegstad was the odd man out with his aforementioned blue-white-green control deck. Tomi Walamies played a version of the deck with Looters, Familiars, Infiltrators, and a standard base of countermagic. He lost to David Humpherys, who ran a similar deck, in the semifinals. The difference was that Humpherys ran Upheaval and Walamies did not. This proved to be the difference, as Humpherys used the reset button to win game 2 and eventually take the match.

All the Masters decklists are available at sideboard.com

The final was a mirror match between Fuller and Humpherys. Game 1 was well under Fuller's control, and all the Canadian had to do was draw one of his many bounce spells to seal the deal. After activating three Cephalid Coliseums and playing a handful of Peeks, Fuller was stunned at his inability to find one. Still, he was able to come back to take the first game. Game 1 took ninety minutes, so the cameras shifted to the final of the Pro Tour, which was happening on the same stage. Game 2 took about as much time as the full five games of the Pro Tour final, and in the end, Fuller emerged victorious.

In total, seventeen of the thirty-two players in the Masters played the Psychatog deck—more than half. When this many pros agree that a certain deck type is good enough to play in a tournament where every match win means at least $2,000 more, you know it has to be good. When three of the top four players in that tournament are playing Psychatog, you know the deck is going to define the format for a long time. In other words, start putting together your own version of the Psychatog deck, or get to work making something that can beat it. If it's good enough to dominate the Masters, then it can certainly dominate your local tournaments.



Dave Humpherys is calm, cool, and collected.

David Humpherys
- Psychatog -

4	Nightscape Familiar
4	Psychatog
4	Shadowmage Infiltrator
4	Counterspell
4	Fact or Fiction
3	Lobotomy
1	Recoil
4	Repulse
4	Syncopate
3	Upheaval
2	Ancient Spring
2	Darkwater Catacombs
8	Island
4	Salt Marsh
3	Sulfur Vent
2	Swamp
4	Underground River

sideboard

1	Dark Banishing
4	Duress
1	Execute
4	Gainsay
3	Slay
2	Vodalian Zombie

Grand Prix Hong Kong

by Josh Bennett

Grand Prix–Hong Kong had a turnout of only 185 players, a number small enough that only six Swiss rounds were necessary. Team AlphaBetaUnlimited.com anticipated the low turnout, and they brought a crew of eight in an effort to dominate the event. Many of the top Japanese players had the same idea, and these big fish had every advantage over the relatively inexperienced Hong Kong crowd.

After Day 1, a pair of Tsuyoshis topped the standings: Tsuyoshi Fujita of Pro Tour–Tokyo fame and Tsuyoshi Ikeda of the renowned Japanese Team Fire Beat. Just ten of thirty-four players with 4-2 records made it to Day 2—fewer than most players expected. It was still a star-studded affair, though, with many of the best Japanese and Western players advancing. The Rochester Drafts of Day 2 were kind to the visiting pros, with most moving effortlessly to the top of the standings.

The Top 8 was a confirmation of the strength of players from the West, as they comprised fully half of the final draft. Jeff Fung was looking for a comeback performance since falling off the Tour radar in 1999. Next was Steven Shears, who was eager to match his brother Brett's Grand Prix–Denver win. Also in the Top 8 were superstars Ryan Fuller and Brian Hegstad. Tsuyoshi Fujita, however, was once again on top, tied with five others at 9-1-2. Japan was further represented by "The Rookie," youngster Shinsuke Hayashi. The remaining line of defense against the Westerners included two standout players from The Philippines: the impetuous Bayani Manansala Jr., and the stone-faced Frederick Salazar.

Though Hong Kong players were absent from the Top 8 (notables Wing Tat Chung and sometimes-pro Teddy Ng placed 14th and 17th, respectively), they did manage to take home four of the Amateur prizes. Yang Zhan of China captured top Amateur honors, taking home a total of $2,000.

The final draft was particularly odd because of some serious redundancy of rare cards. Hegstad had two Mortivores, but managed to keep only one of the three Upheavals from Fujita. Shears got a pair of Miraris and drafted his deck accordingly. He ran only nine creatures, three of which were Barbarian Lunatics, with dreams of Mirari-enhanced Innocent Bloods dancing in his head. He had more than enough burn to go to the dome.

There were even three Graceful Antelopes. Though less flashy than some other rares in the draft, they provided valuable defensive bodies, as well as a way to dominate decks that contained plains. Ultimately, though, it was Fujita's deck that was feared. In addition to his twin Upheavals, Fujita had two Think Tanks to get him to them, as well as the standard blue-white arsenal. He even had Psychatog, which spelled "game over" with Upheaval.

The quarterfinals were quick. As expected, Fujita rolled Fuller, whose draft didn't even stop at "bad" on its way to "worse." Salazar's white-green-blue deck showed its early game against Shears, who drew only his most expensive removal and succumbed quickly. Manansala's blue-white deck couldn't stand up to Hayashi's three Nantuko Disciples. In the final quarterfinal match, Fung advanced past Hegstad, but not before both received warnings for unsporting conduct.

Fung made short work of Hayashi thanks in large part to Thought Devourer. And in an upset, Salazar beat Fujita. Fujita was actually up a game after Upheaval and Psychatog did their thing. But then Salazar came back with quick beats, and a topdecked Iridescent Angel put Fujita on a five-turn clock in the third game. Fujita dug desperately but found no Upheaval. In the end, he extended his hand to the applause of the crowd.

The final was a lopsided affair, with Fung in a dominant position. His spirits rose with each card he played. He tried in vain to coax a laugh from Salazar, but with so much on the line, Salazar refused to break his concentration. In fact, it's a credit to Salazar that he played so meticulously in the face of such a bad matchup. As Fung attacked for the final points of damage, Salazar relaxed visibly, shaking Fung's hand in congratulations. Fung complimented him on his fine performance, and said that he hoped to see him at Pro Tour–San Diego.

Jeff Fung
- Rochester Draft -

1	Angelic Wall
1	Auramancer
1	Aven Cloudchaser
1	Aven Fisher
1	Aven Windreader
1	Balshan Griffin
1	Cephalid Looter
2	Escape Artist
1	Hallowed Healer
2	Mystic Visionary
1	Mystic Zealot
2	Patrol Hound
1	Thought Devourer
1	Dematerialize
1	Embolden
1	Kirtar's Desire
1	Rites of Refusal
2	Second Thoughts
1	Shelter
1	Abandoned Outpost
8	Island
9	Plains
1	Seafloor Debris

sideboard

1	Acceptable Losses
1	Anarchist
3	Cease-Fire
1	Centaur Garden
1	Decompose
1	Dedicated Martyr
1	Dwarven Grunt
1	Immobilizing Ink
1	Last Rites
1	Pardic Miner
1	Phantom Whelp
1	Pilgrim of Justice
1	Pilgrim of Virtue
1	Ray of Distortion
1	Sarcatog
1	Skycloud Egg
1	Sphere of Duty
1	Touch of Invisibility

Rank	Name	Prize	Pro Points
1	Jeff Fung	$2,400	6
2	Frederick Salazar	$1,700	4
3	Tsuyoshi Fujita	$1,200	3
4	Shinsuke Hayashi	$1,000	2
5	Bayani Manansala Jr.	$800	1
6	Steve Shears	$800	1
7	Brian Hegstad	$800	1
8	Ryan Fuller	$800	1
9	Daniel Clegg	$500	1
10	Baoqiang Lin	$500	1
11	Shuuhei Nakamura	$500	1
12	Francis Robert	$500	1
13	Albertus Law	$500	1
14	Wing Tat Chung	$500	1
15	Pavel Matousek	$500	1
16	Yang Fu Yu	$500	1
17	Teddy Ng	$250	1
18	Zhan Yang	$250	1
19	Chun Hung Wong	$250	1
20	Arthur Li	$250	1
21	Jun Nobushita	$250	1
22	Junichi Kawano	$250	1
23	Kou Okada	$250	1
24	Kenichi Fujita	$250	1
25	Wing Lok Tam	$250	1
26	Joseph Leung	$250	1
27	Nicholas Wong	$250	1
28	Katsuhiro Mori	$250	1
29	Takao Higaki	$250	1
30	Chris Benafel	$250	1
31	Siu Wing Chan	$250	1
32	Paul Charles Sia	$250	1
33	Sam Lei Kang Lau		
34	Chee-yin Ho		
35	Edsel Alvarez		
36	Kai Cheong Tang		
37	Kong Lam Yin		
38	Djonathan Paculio		
39	Osamu Fujita		
40	Thomas Jim		
41	Chit Hwang Chang		
42	Zang Shu Nu		
43	Tsuyoshi Ikeda		
44	Kwok Wing Ng		
45	Satoshi Nakamura		
46	Wing Kwong Ng		
47	Li Siu Chung		
48	Anc Hu		
49	Chiang Kang Nien		
50	Lucifar Sun		
51	Huin Long Kwen		
52	Chee Wong Lee		
53	Terence Wong		
54	Teddy Sy		
55	Arthit Eurkittiroj		
56	Tom To		
57	Zhengyan Yang		
58	Tsz Hong Chiu		
59	Yan Wang		
60	Koon Hay Wong		
61	Tokiko Mitsui		
62	wai hong sit		
63	Edison Kam		
64	Yu Shih Lin		

Grand Prix Atlanta

by Aaron Forsythe

As the opening bell sounded at Grand Prix–Atlanta, all signs pointed to a victory for some member of Team CMU. Not only was the previous Peach State event won by a member of that team—original patriarch Randy Buehler during the 1997–1998 season—but also current captain Mike Turian had triumphed at the only other North American *Odyssey* Limited Grand Prix (Montreal) just weeks before.

A freak airport security issue kept a few of the game's bigger names, including Ben Rubin and Chris Pikula, out of the city and subsequently the tournament, but 377 players did manage to find their way to the Gwinnett Civic and Cultural Center for two days of *Odyssey* Sealed Deck and Rochester Draft. As Sunday came to a close, however, 375 of them were eliminated, and the CMU mojo had worked again, with roommates Eugene Harvey and Andrew Johnson in the final match.

As teammates, the two had practiced with and against one another numerous times, and they believed their rigorous pre-event play schedule would translate into an advantage over the field. But their close relationship rewarded them in more tangible ways during the tournament, as well.

Twice during Day 2 drafts, Harvey and Johnson were seated next to one another, and both times it paid huge dividends for the CMU duo. After round 10, Harvey was perched alone at the top of the standings, with Johnson in sixth place. Their high standings landed them in seats 2 and 3 respectively at table 1 for the second Rochester Draft of the day, and the two cooperated beautifully. Johnson needed to go at least 2-1 at the table in order to make Top 8, and Harvey, with considerably more breathing room, handed Johnson a fantastic white-blue deck on a platter. Johnson went on to run the table, eventually showing his gratitude by beating Harvey in the final Swiss round to end up the number-one seed going into the elimination rounds.

In the Top 8 draft, they were again seated next to each other, with Johnson in seat 4 and Harvey in seat 5. This time it was Harvey who was the recipient of the amazing white-blue deck; his version sported an astounding six Mystic Zealots. Johnson put together a blazingly fast red-green deck, and the two teammates sliced through the competition to end up facing one another in an amicable final showdown.

Eugene Harvey
- Odyssey Rochester Draft -

1	Angelic Wall
1	Aven Cloudchaser
1	Aven Flock
2	Aven Windreader
1	Blessed Orator
1	Cephalid Scout
5	Mystic Zealot
1	Phantom Whelp
1	Pilgrim of Justice
1	Pilgrim of Virtue
1	Careful Study
2	Embolden
2	Peek
1	Psionic Gift
2	Shelter
7	Island
10	Plains

sideboard

1	Auramancer
1	Cabal Pit
1	Careful Study
1	Cease-Fire
1	Cephalid Coliseum
1	Chatter of the Squirrel
1	Coffin Purge
2	Confessor
1	Devoted Caretaker
1	Fervent Denial
1	Filthy Cur
1	Laquatus's Creativity
1	Life Burst
1	Mystic Zealot
1	Pilgrim of Virtue
1	Price of Glory
1	Psionic Gift
1	Sacred Rites
1	Scrivener
1	Sphere of Law
1	Tireless Tribe

The Top 8 they had to fight through was not an easy one. Matt Linde, a former U.S. national champion, had just secured himself several more Pro Tour invitations with this Top 8; he had been in danger of falling off the "gravy train." Ohio's Alex Borteh, still riding high after his appearance in the Worlds final, had also made the Top 8 at Grand Prix–Denver in August. Brad Swan, the son of a Grand Prix champion, recently hit the big time with a final-day appearance at Pro Tour–Barcelona. Craig Wescoe of Tennessee made the Top 8 at Grand Prix–Minneapolis during the previous Qualifier season. Italian Antonino DeRosa, currently studying in Florida, is a rising star with a few Top 32 finishes to his name. Local Bin Chen, a native of China and a veteran of two Pro Tour events, rounded out the final drafters.

Circuit regular Brock Parker and Florida's Joe Crosby missed the final cut on tiebreakers, Crosby losing out to Borteh for the coveted eighth slot by only .12% in the opponent win percentage column. Other high-finishing pros, including Sol Malka (14th), Eric Froehlich (15th), and Ken Ho (16th), allowed the prized Pro Tour invitations to slip as far as 18th, and the Amateur money went down into the sixties, as well. The wealth was indeed shared this fine weekend, and more than just CMUers went home happy.

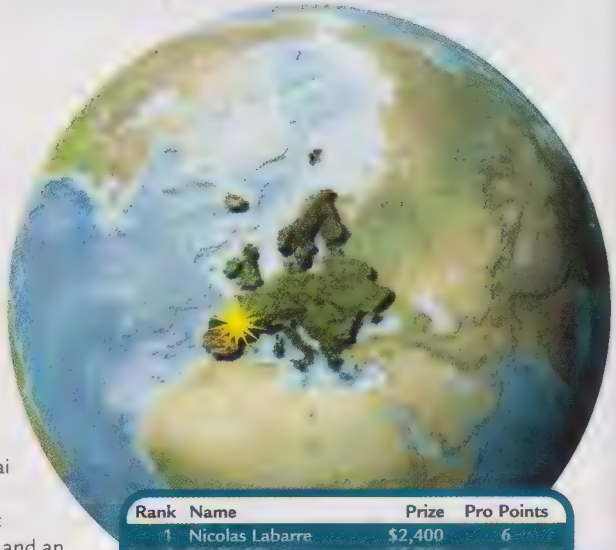
And what of the CMU dynamic duo? Their final match was quick and bloody, with Johnson throwing every conceivable fast-damage source at Harvey: Mad Dog, Ember Beast, Reckless Charge, Demoralize, Sylvan Might—you name it. But Harvey had nothing if not defense: His six Zealots and multiple Emboldens and Shelters allowed him to stabilize at low life, and then his air force took over.

Johnson, quoting *Searching for Bobby Fischer,* asked Harvey to take the draw so they could share the championship. But pride and bragging rights carry a bit of weight, even between teammates and roommates. Harvey, through great blocking and calculated use of his tricks, managed to neutralize everything Johnson could muster, and, as Mike Turian and a host of other spectators looked on, Johnson laughed, scooped up his cards, and just like that, Eugene Harvey was the champion of Grand Prix–Atlanta.

Rank	Name	Prize	Pro Points
1	Eugene Harvey	$2,400	6
2	Andrew Johnson		
3	Brad Swan		
4	Matt Linde		
5	Bin Chen	$800	
6	Antonino De Rosa	$800	
7	Craig Wescoe	$800	
8	Alex Borteh	$800	
9	Joseph Crosby	$500	
10	Brock Parker		
11	Lee Stehr	$500	
12	Matthew Ranks		
13	Mauro Bongiovanni	$500	
14	Sol Malka		
15	Eric Froehlich	$500	
16	Ken Ho		
17	Doug Tice	$250	
18	Chuck Littlefield		
19	Michael Pustilnik	$250	
20	C. Uriah Braden		
21	Gary Rush	$250	
22	Chad Ellis		
23	Daniel Brown	$250	
24	Eric Lewandowski		
25	Alan Comer	$250	
26	Tom Willoughby		
27	Laura Karem	$250	
28	Gerardo Godinez Estrada		
29	James Lucy	$250	
30	Ben Stoll		
31	Kenny Hsiung	$250	
32	Robert Dougherty		
33	Neil Reeves		
34	Trevor Blackwell		
35	Brian Kibler		
36	Bryan Hubble		
37	Randy Davis		
38	Chris Fall		
39	David Leader		
40	Steven Hall		
41	Bill Stead		
42	Dustin Stern		
43	Chris Donahoe		
44	Chris Lovelace		
45	David Humpherys		
46	Paul Leone		
47	Ed Luskey		
48	Ryan Ba		
49	Andrew Wolf		
50	John Lagges		
51	Tammy Ehrhart		
52	David Devenport		
53	Philip Frenzau		
54	Takashi Matsushita		
55	Joseph Greer		
56	Kory Dunham		
57	Bart Edwards		
58	Brian Day		
59	William Ericson		
60	Kelly Taylor		
61	Brian Fox		
62	Paul Sottosanti		
63	Adam Racht		
64	James Denmark		

GRAND PRIX Biarritz

by Rui Oliveira



After winning his semifinal match against Lucio Moratinos from Spain, Nicolas Labarre stepped onto the balcony of the site, overlooking the beautiful Biarritz beach. He was trying hard to remain calm and focused on the seemingly impossible task ahead: beating the best deck played by the best **Magic** player—Kai Budde.

With a field of 524 players (among them a 200-strong Spanish contingent that almost overwhelmed the French hosts), making Day 2 wasn't easy. Some got lucky with their decks, and others got lucky playing, but a few big names found their backs against the wall. With eight rounds on Day 1, players needed at least 5-1-1 records to make sure they were among the magic 64, while 5-2 players had to hope they had good tiebreakers. The last round of Day 1 featured a match between Alex Shvartsman and Gary Wise, two marquee names in Pro Tour **Magic**. In the end, Shvartsman won through.

The Top 64 had the unenviable task of trying not to step on too many toes. Rochester Draft might just be the toughest format in **Magic**, requiring not only a firm understanding of the format but also an ability to adapt to the mood of your table. Although *Odyssey* drafting proved to be not as color restrictive as *Invasion* drafting, the politeness factor was much higher than it was a couple of years ago.

As the day progressed, two parallel races started to form. While some competitors wished only to reach the Top 8, some had other aspirations, such as qualifying for Pro Tour–San Diego. With players already qualified in the top places, the slots were sure to trickle down a few spots. One of the players aiming for that goal was Ben Ronaldson, who hung in until the very end and finished a few places below the qualification line thanks to a final-round defeat.

The Top 8 was fairly diverse, with three French players (Labarre, Olivier Ruel, and Alexis Dumay), two Spanish players (Ferran Vila and Moratinos), two Dutch players (Alexander Witt and Joost Vollebregt) and a lone German player (obviously the unavoidable Kai).

When the last draft finally got underway, a sort of resignation loomed over the site. In fact, from the moment Kai Budde arrived, some players took it for granted that he would win it all. His draft deck, with two Æther Bursts, two Repels, and an obnoxious recycling ability involving three Scriveners and two Gravediggers, only strengthened that idea.

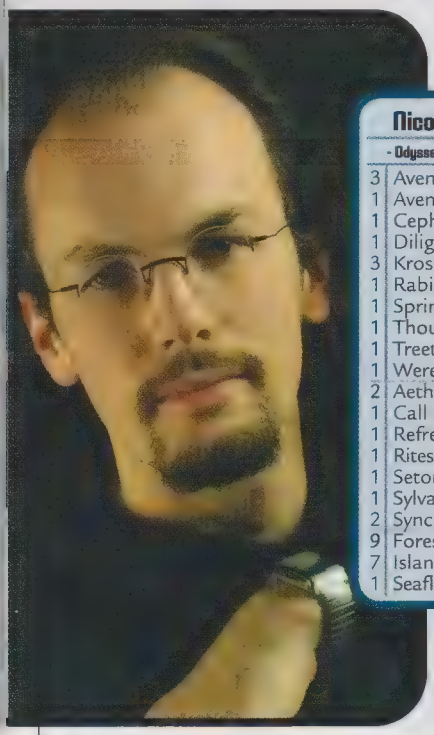
In the quarterfinals, a mana-screwed third game was the demise of crowd favorite Ruel against the pumped-up Moratinos. The other Spanish representative, Vila, wasn't as lucky, and despite a drawn-out defensive game, he faltered against Vollebregt. Budde showed exactly what his deck could do by totally destroying Dumay's hopes of winning in France, while Labarre proved too strong for Witt.

The match between Labarre and Moratinos was the classic struggle between aggression and control. In the end, and despite all his heart and energy, Moratinos was forced to concede to Labarre's more collected and cold defensive posture. In the meantime, Budde was stomping out Vollebregt's aspirations. The final matchup was set, and everyone was ready to end the two days of hard competition.

Whatever inspiration Labarre found on that balcony, he kept it to himself. He has said he always seems to make finals and then stumble. His only tournament victory up to that point was in a Prerelease tournament. This lack of finals success might have made someone else second-guess his or her chances, but Labarre shrugged it off and stepped up to the table with a big smile.

In the third and decisive game, Kai drew a weak hand but decided to risk it instead of mulliganing in such a tight match. If Kai had the best deck on the table, Labarre proved once again to be a metagame wizard by drafting a deck that could give the best deck a hard time (like at 1999 Pro Tour–Rome, where he played a Merfolk deck to reach the final amid a sea of Academy decks).

Budde fought as hard as he could, but his deck wouldn't cooperate, and Labarre had no mercy. As Budde drew his final card of the match, some half expected a saving Morphling to show up. He leaned forward on the table, and even the so-far confident Labarre seemed nervous. When Labarre saw Kai's smile and extended hand, however, he realized he had done the unthinkable: beaten Kai Budde.



Nicolas Labarre
- Odyssey Rochester Draft -

3	Aven Fisher
1	Aven Smokechaser
1	Cephalid Broker
1	Diligent Farmhand
3	Krosan Avenger
1	Rabid Elephant
1	Springing Tiger
1	Thought Eater
1	Treetop Sentinel
1	Werebear
2	Aether Burst
1	Call of the Herd
1	Refresh
1	Rites of Refusal
1	Seton's Desire
1	Sylvan Might
2	Syncopate
9	Forest
7	Island
1	Seafloor Debris

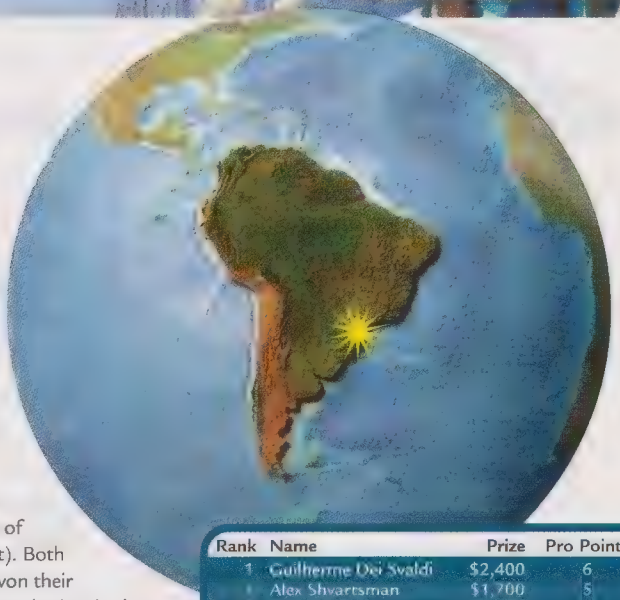
sideboard

1	Aboshan's Desire
1	Auramancer
2	Cartographer
1	Chatter of the Squirrel
1	Confessor
1	Dedicated Martyr
1	Demoralize
1	Engulfing Flames
2	Escape Artist
1	Filthy Cur
1	Kirtar's Desire
1	Mystic Zealot
1	Nantuko Shrine
1	Pilgrim of Justice
1	Rites of Spring
1	Sphere of Grace
1	Sphere of Reason
1	Spiritualize
1	Tremble

Rank	Name	Prize	Pro Points
1	Nicolas Labarre	$2,400	6
3	Lucio Moratinos	$1,200	4
5	Ferran Vila	$800	3
7	Alexis Dumay	$800	3
9	Guillaume Matignon	$500	2
11	Julien Colomb	$500	2
13	Matnas Jorstedt	$500	2
15	Benjamin Caumont	$500	2
17	Christophe Haon	$250	1
19	Ryan Fuller	$250	1
21	Jens Thoren	$250	1
22	Anton Jonsson	$250	1
23	Hugo Machado	$250	1
24	Iwan Tan	$250	1
25	Raul Mestre	$250	1
26	Fran van de Hanenberg	$250	1
27	Ben Ronaldson	$250	1
28	Steve Queroub	$250	1
29	Joao Duarte	$250	1
30	Roger Leu	$250	1
31	Romuald Balluais	$250	1
32	Alex Menal	$250	1
33	Daniel Martin		
34	Jacob Arias		
35	Raphael Levy		
36	Camille Gleizes		
37	Xavier Curto		
38	Thomas Bevilacqua		
39	Mattias Kettil		
40	Pierre Canali		
41	Omar Sagol		
42	Philip Parker		
43	Brais Rodriguez		
44	Renato Graça		
45	Luis Fajardo		
46	Thomas Shaw		
47	Nicolas Bornarel		
48	Chris Pikula		
49	Francisco Rueda		
50	Frederic Wolfsheimer		
51	Antoine Ruel		
52	Jonathan Carter		
53	Marc Iglesias		
54	Julien Gross		
55	Eugene Okin		
56	Wilhelm Gruber		
57	Aleja Dominguez Ramos		
58	David Norgeot		
59	Guillaume Yvon		
60	Tiago Chan		
61	Sergio Gonzalez		
62	Alejandro F Casado		
63	José Luis Gómez		
64	Remi Le Meur		

Curitiba

by Rui Oliveira



After Grand Prix–Curitiba was over, the few people still in the play area were treated to the perfect picture of Brazilian **Magic**. While Guilherme Dei Svaldi, as quiet as ever and with his usual small smile, seemed to be musing about his victory, his teammates and friends took mock victory laps around the site with the huge trophy.

Among them was the player who planted the seed of the winning deck. Dentinho came up with his deck idea long before *Odyssey* came out, building a green-white deck focused on denying opponents use of their mana. While the metagame shifted around them, Dentinho's teammates helped him tweak and streamline that idea, resulting in the deck that Svaldi used to win it all. That is the foundation of Brazilian **Magic:** teamwork and fraternity possible only in a country the size of a subcontinent.

That near-deserted room seemed miles away from the noise of the Top 8. The Brazilian crowd leaned over the chairs trying to support their five compatriots (Svaldi, Leopoldo Martins, Eliton Inacio, Raphael Gunther, and José Mangueira) to the final.

On Day 1, four players waltzed through a field of 330 players to finish 7-0: Svaldi, playing "Dentinho"; Antoine Ruel, playing "Dumbo"; William Possato, playing "Three-Deuce"; and Rafaël Le Saux, also playing Dumbo. They had very different Day 2 fates.

Svaldi and Ruel reached the Top 8, but Le Saux totally imploded. For the second time in Brazil, he started with a 7-0 record—this time reaching 8-0 before dropping a game—only to lose round after round to miss out on the Top 8. The Argentinean ended his tournament in 23rd place.

If Le Saux's tumble was the story of Day 2, Day 1 had some interesting stories of its own. The first happened in round 4, when the players with three byes finally got a chance to flex their muscles. Alex Shvartsman, Ryan Fuller, and the Ruel brothers found out they were paired up against each other! Shvartsman defeated Olivier—without using his sideboard—and Antoine beat Fuller.

On the last round of the day, there was another important moment. Several players found themselves in trouble, needing to win just to have a shot at Day 2 (because only a handful of players with 5-2 records would make it). Both Fuller and Carlos "Jabaiano" Romão won their rounds, but the Brazilian, winner of Grand Prix–Rio de Janeiro last year, missed the cut. Fuller went on to Day 2, but he finished low in the standings.

As usual, Day 2 rolled by with tension leading up to the Top 8. Joining the five Brazilians were Shvartsman, again adding to his Grand Prix Top 8 record, Antoine Ruel, and Argentinean José Barbero.

In a weekend over which Donate was shut out of the top places, Curitiba had a diverse field: two "Finkulas," played by Shvartsman and Barbero; "Malka," played by Mangueira; Three-Deuce, played by Gunther; "Reanimator," played by Martins; Dumbo, played by Ruel; "Counter-Finkel," played by Inacio; and Dentinho, played by Svaldi.

The quarterfinals started off blazingly fast. Martins's Reanimator deck quickly took care of Gunther, Shvartsman carved his way through Inacio's counters, and Svaldi managed to pin down Barbero's mana. The three semifinalists—as well as the crowd—still had to wait for a considerable time before Ruel's Dumbo deck finally prevailed over Mangueira's Malka deck in a long, tough, final game.

That match lasted so long and took so much out of the players that even a seasoned pro like Antoine Ruel had to ask for a few minutes to recover. He probably knew he was in for another long match.

Sure enough, Shvartsman ensured a spot in the final before Ruel and Svaldi could offer any hint of who would join him. Svaldi gave Dumbo no chance to reach a consistent mana base, and with a huge crowd looming around the table, Svaldi finally got Ruel to concede the final match when a desperate Fact or Fiction was countered.

For the second-consecutive Brazilian Grand Prix, the final paired up a Brazilian against Alex Shvartsman. It's a tribute to the American's friendly behavior that the crowd, despite rooting for Svaldi, was happy to see him do well. On their home turf, however, the Brazilians would not be denied, and Svaldi crushed a mana-flooded Shvartsman in the third and decisive game.

Guilherme Dei Svaldi

- Extended -

4	Birds Of Paradise
3	Granger Guildmage
2	Mother Of Runes
3	Quirion Ranger
4	River Boa
2	Armageddon
4	Call Of The Herd
2	Phyrexian Furnace
4	Seal Of Cleansing
4	Swords To Plowshares
3	Wax/Wane
3	Winter Orb
1	Brushland
2	Forest
4	Rishadan Port
1	Rith's Grove
4	Savannah
4	Taiga
1	Thran Quarry
1	Undiscovered Paradise
4	Wasteland

sideboard

4	Bottle Gnomes
2	Choke
3	COP: Red
2	Phyrexian Furnace
4	Pyroblast

Rank	Name	Prize	Pro Points
1	Guilherme Dei Svaldi	$2,400	6
	Alex Shvartsman	$1,700	5
	Antoine Ruel	$1,200	4
	Leopoldo Martins	$1,000	4
	Raphael Gunther	$800	3
	Jose Barbero	$800	3
	José Franci Mangueira	$800	3
	Eliton Inacio	$800	3
	Carlos Zaniolo Filho	$500	2
	Celso M Hino	$500	2
	Celso Zampere Junio	$500	2
	Dawton Possato	$500	2
	Matheus Chaud Quinta	$500	2
	Matias Gabrenja	$500	2
	Jose Luis Capdevila	$500	2
	Eduardo Poplawski	$500	2
	Claudio Moraes	$250	1
	Rodrigo Nascimento	$250	1
	Leandro mib Vieira	$250	1
	Bernardo Cabral	$250	1
	William Possato	$250	1
	Rafael Le Saux	$250	1
	Ryan Fuller	$250	1
	Diego Gimenes	$250	1
	Sergio Longo	$250	1
	Tiago Fe Souza Araujo	$250	1
	Vagner Casatti	$250	1
	Sergio Martins	$250	1
	Adriano Yuji Ueda	$250	1
	Daniel Ferrari	$250	1
	Adham Cabrera	$250	1
	José Luis Echeverria	$250	1
	Fernando Bandeira		
	Pablo Huerta		
	Michel Shirozono		
	Raphael Dias		
	Joao Lima		
	Marcelo Montú		
	Luis Cesar Mattos		
	Marcel Alberge Ribas		
	Leonardo Ma Fernandes		
	Ronei Passos		
	Fabiano Lucindo		
	Diego Ostrovich		
	Marcio Araujo		
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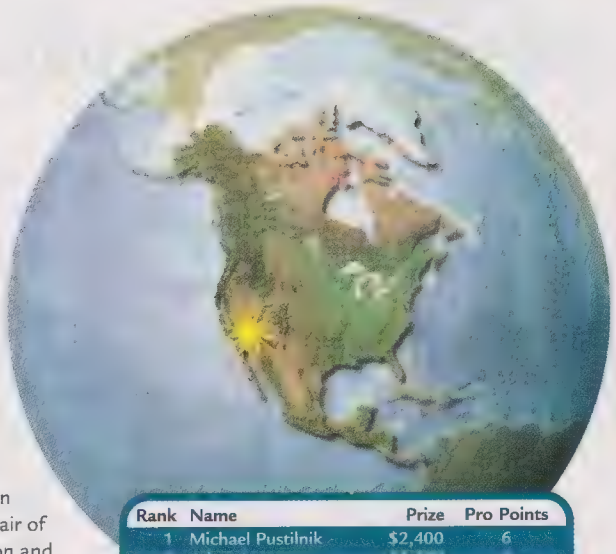
	Carlos Huarapil		
	Pedro Henrique Uehara		
	Pedro Motta		
	Daniel Feil		
	Marcos Tanaka		
	Guilhe Leite da Silva		
	Enco Almeida		
	Rodrigo Possamai		
	Marcelo Andrade		
	Miguel Rozemberg		
	Fernando Soave		
	Andre Nascimento		
	Jeronimo Pereira		
	Rafael Mendonca		
	Daniel Brasil		
	Valdecir Vie Da Silva		
	Olivier Ruel		
	Emilio Dario Raggio		

Grand Prix Las Vegas

by Randy Buehler



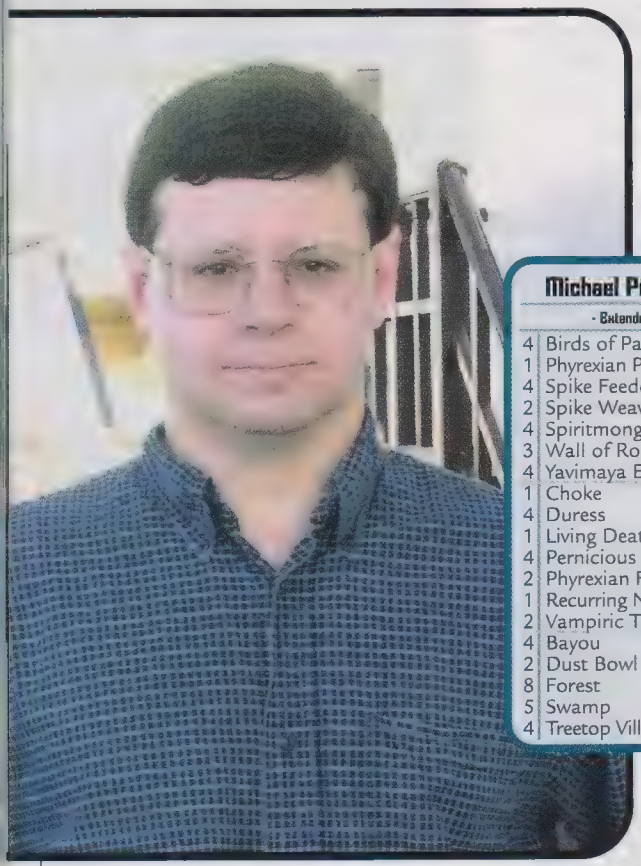
No one knew it at the time, but Grand Prix–Las Vegas turned out to be a major turning point for the Extended environment. Before Vegas, everyone was convinced that Donate was the best deck—Kai Budde won with it, and nothing seemed to beat it consistently in playtesting. Alan Comer, however, showed up with a weird little ten-land deck that he dubbed "Miracle Grow." Suddenly, the world changed. Comer's wasn't the only deck that beat the hell out of Donate—five other green archetypes made the Top 8. In the end, Mike Pustilnik won with a green-black card-advantage deck known affectionately as "The Rock and His Millions."

Pustilnik defeated 461 other players to claim his second Grand Prix title. Pustilnik was already the only person in the game who had won Pro Tour, Grand Prix, and Masters Series events, and now "Mikey P's" résumé looks even better. Pustilnik's deck was pretty much the same green-black deck that Sol Malka has been running for years and tuning for each new incarnation of the Extended environment. The good Doctor's opponent in the final was an amateur named Adam Lane. With the first-place Amateur prize of $1,500 already in Lane's pocket, "Mongo" went for the win while a crowd of his buddies, who had all driven in from Sacramento, CA, cheered him on. Alas, Lane's "Three-Deuce" deck had no real chance against The Rock. Pustilnik's creatures were better, and his Spike Feeders meant Lane had no real chance to burn him out. Lane had to settle for $3,200 while Pustilnik took home $2,400.

While everyone was expecting Donate to dominate the field, the highest-finishing Donate player was all the way down in 20th place. The Top 8 didn't have a single island or Force of Will. Instead, eight different green decks duked it out for the title. Sean Fitzgerald played another copy of The Rock, Scott Gerhardt also played Three-Deuce, Rob Dougherty debuted Your Move Games's "Wild Zombies," John Balla played his own "Threshold-Geddon" concoction, and a pair of "PT Junk" decks (played by Kaare Anderson and Shannon Krumick) rounded out the forest-fest. Many players were heard making elephant sounds, as twenty-three copies of Call of the Herd made the Top 8, along with several sideboarded Chokes.

The most influential aspect of Vegas, though, was the introduction of Miracle Grow. Deckbuilding wizard Alan Comer went back to his "Turbo Xerox" roots to put together a deck with only ten lands (plus four Land Grants), that made up for its low land count by playing every cheap, blue cantrip Comer could find. A bunch of free permission helped run the deck, while a previously unnoticed *Planeshift* rare—Quirion Dryad—held everything together by growing larger when all those other spells got played. Comer designed the deck primarily as an anti-Donate deck, and it destroys Donate. Comer got edged out of the Top 8 on tiebreakers mostly because he ran out of Donate decks to beat. All over the world, **Magic** players who read *Sideboard* coverage of Grand Prix–Las Vegas put this bizarre deck together and found out it's really quite good. With just a few tweaks, it turns out to be more than just an anti-Donate deck, too. When all was said and done, it was Miracle Grow, not Donate, that defined the rest of the Extended season. Eight variations of Miracle Grow made it into the Top 8 of the remaining three Grand Prix events in the Extended round, and quite a number of people used it to qualify for Pro Tour–Osaka.

When people look back at Grand Prix–Las Vegas, though, it's not Alan Comer's face they'll see smiling back at them, but rather Mike Pustilnik's. On the one day of the Extended season when green was king and blue was terrible, it was Pustilnik's green deck that brought home the hardware.



Michael Pustilnik

- Extended -

4	Birds of Paradise
1	Phyrexian Plaguelord
4	Spike Feeder
2	Spike Weaver
4	Spiritmonger
3	Wall of Roots
4	Yavimaya Elder
1	Choke
4	Duress
1	Living Death
4	Pernicious Deed
2	Phyrexian Furnace
1	Recurring Nightmare
2	Vampiric Tutor
4	Bayou
2	Dust Bowl
8	Forest
5	Swamp
4	Treetop Village

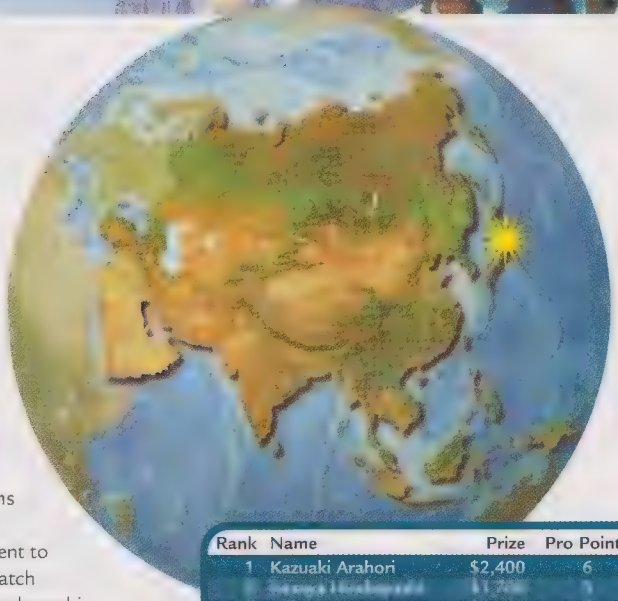
sideboard

1	Choke
3	Diabolic Edict
1	Dust Bowl
2	Emerald Charm
1	Massacre
1	Phyrexian Furnace
1	Rank and File
1	Stench of Evil
1	Tsunami
2	Uktabi Orangutan
1	Volrath's Stronghold

Rank	Name	Prize	Pro Points
1	Michael Pustilnik	$2,400	6
	Adam Lane		
	John Balla	$1,200	4
	Sean Fitzgerald		4
	Kaare Anderson	$800	3
	Robert Dougherty		3
	Shannon Krumick	$800	3
	Scott Gerhardt		3
	Alan Comer	$500	2
	James Halter		2
	Joel Frank	$500	2
	David Humpherys		2
	Peter Leiher	$500	2
	Ross Roemer		2
	Brian Davis	$500	2
	Huei-Saint Shwe		2
	Gary Rush	$250	1
	David Rood		1
	Bryce Currence	$250	1
	Brian Hegstad		1
	Blake Quelle	$250	1
	Daniel Gutierrez		1
	Gary Tahm	$250	1
	Bill Macey		1
	Gerardo Godinez Estrada	$250	1
	Rick Chong		1
	Eric Taylor	$250	1
	Jeffrey Auer		1
	Daniel Clegg	$250	1
	Doug Tice		1
	Seth Jaffee	$250	1
	Frank Gilson		1
	Riad Mourssali		
	Ben Rubin		
	Matt McAlexander		
	Mark Gresbach		
	Steven Jarvis		
	Derek Rollins		
	Josh Martin		
	Matthew Johnson		
	Tim Valdez		
	Patrick Selk		
	James Bucknell		
	Zvi Mowshowitz		
	Bryan Harrington		
	Mike Meghinchey		
	Matt Linde		
	Tony Hsu		
	Michael Fimbres		
	Mike Hron		
	William Jensen		
	Derek Starleaf		
	John Shuler		
	Arun Sharma		
	Steven O'Mahoney-Schwartz		
	Michael Tunan		
	Brian Faires		
	Michael Mindes		
	Tim Stoltzfus		
	Chris Davis		
	Patrick Johnson		
	Larry Laclaire		
	Chris Benafel		
	Gerald Linn		

Grand Prix Sendai

by Josh Bennett



The weekend of the Grand Prix, Sendai was hit by a monster snowstorm that left a record twenty centimeters of snow in its wake. With the roads not being clear until after Saturday, many players feared the drive in. Nevertheless, 427 players showed up to do Extended Constructed battle.

There were plenty of metagame cues from Grand Prix–Las Vegas. There, Donate decks turned up in abundance, as did the "Junk" decks that aimed to stomp them. In fact, it seemed like Day 2 at Vegas was all about hating Donate. Champion Mike Pustilnik even had main-deck Choke. So even considering Japan's preference for blue, it seemed like running Donate was a losing proposition.

Among the maddening crowd was the usual cast of characters. New Asian regulars The Invasion (having lost their ABU sponsorship) were present, boasting their standard roster of stars like Chris Benafel and Brian Hegstad, and were joined this time by Worlds finalist Alex Borteh.

Players with three byes seemed split mostly among the trinity of Junk, "The Rock and His Millions," and Donate, though most, figuring that the threat of hate was past, went with the Intuition–Accumulated Knowledge engine.

The Day 2 field was pretty well defined: fourteen Donate decks, twelve Junk decks, and eleven copies of Rock—the deck that took the day at Vegas the week before. After those, no deck had more than three players behind it.

The Top 8 had five—count 'em, five—Donate decks. No Junk. No Rock. This was music to Mike Long's ears. He'd been smashing Donate all weekend, dropping only one game, and that against Jun Nobushita when Long failed to draw a land over twenty cards. His quarterfinal match against APAC Champion Jin Okamoto was telling, as he waltzed over him on his way to the semifinals.

And speaking of cagey metagame moves, Kazuaki Arahori's deck was well suited to dismantle Donate. He had solid beatdown, countermagic, and the almighty Winter Orb to cripple his opponents' mana. He met Rookie of the Year Katsuhiro Mori in the quarterfinals and took no prisoners.

Next door, Yuki Murakami was showing Ishida why combo decks just wreck beatdown. Though Ishida got a horde of Zombies on the table in both games, Murakami just got his card drawing working and soaked up damage with Illusions of Grandeur. It was hardly a match.

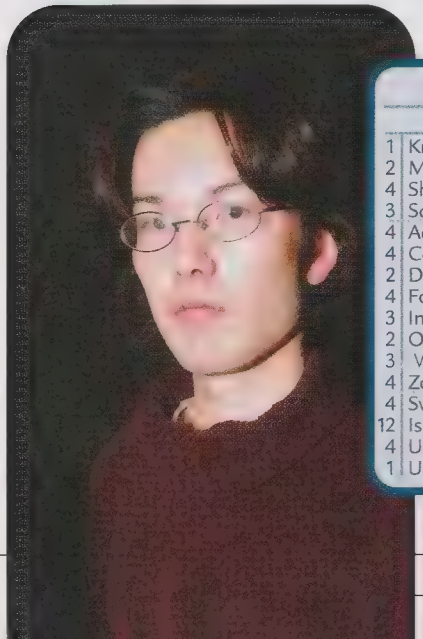
The only quarterfinal match that went to three games was the Donate mirror match between Kazufumi Abe and Kazuya Hirabayashi. Shockingly, it had few spectators. Hirabayashi emerged from the ordeal the victor, only to run straight into another mirror match against Murakami. Neither was happy about that state of affairs, though Hirabayashi managed to struggle through to another victory.

The other semifinal match had everyone's attention. Mike Long joked that the winner of his match against Arahori would win the tournament, but that was only common sense. Both players had read the field like a book and brought sledgehammers.

Long had the first game in control, but a mistake let Arahori back in it. That gave Arahori time to find Zombie Infestation, and from there it was just a matter of time until the swarm went in for the win. In game 2, Long's Land Grant was Force of Willed, leaving him landless. He slammed his deck—it was his turn to topdeck. But it wasn't meant to be. He couldn't counter Arahori's Zombie Infestation, and soon Arahori was showing him the door.

So it was Hirabayashi and Arahori in the final. Arahori was confident in the first game until Hirabayashi played Morphling, protected it with two Force of Wills, and then ripped Accumulated Knowledge for four. He won that one. In game 2, Duresses paved the way for Arahori's Shadowmage Infiltrator, which let him keep up with Hirabayashi's card drawing. He followed up with Phyrexian Negator to even the match.

In the final game, Arahori had to mulligan to five, and held just one land. Hirabayashi had kept two land and Brainstorm, but amazingly drew no more land. A few turns later, he tapped out for Sapphire Medallion, and Arahori made him pay with Phyrexian Negator. Hirabayashi had to Force twice to keep it off the board. Still, he had two Pyroblasts in hand. He practically fell over at Arahori's next play: Zombie Infestation. The Zombies came down in droves, and soon Arahori was champion, making him the second amateur Japanese Grand Prix champion in a row.



Kazuaki Arahori

- Extended -

1	Krovikan Horror
2	Masticore
4	Shadowmage Infiltrator
3	Squee, Goblin Nabob
4	Accumulated Knowledge
4	Counterspell
2	Daze
4	Force of Will
3	Intuition
2	Opposition
3	Winter Orb
4	Zombie Infestation
4	Swamp
12	Island
4	Underground Sea
1	Undiscovered Paradise

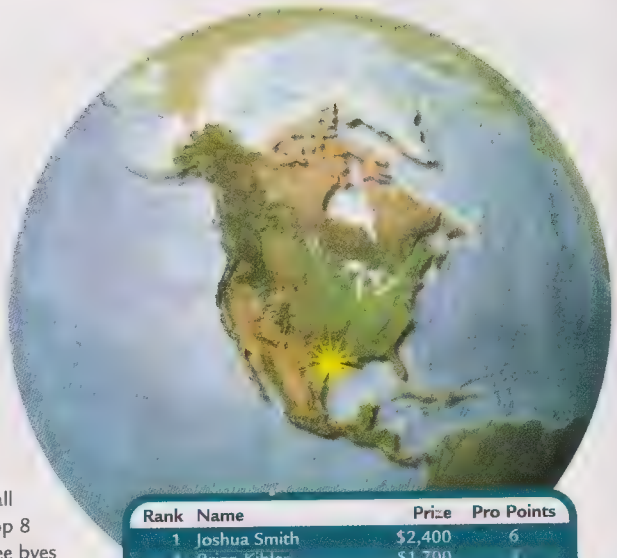
sideboard

3	Back to Basics
4	Duress
3	Hibernation
2	Massacre
3	Phyrexian Negator

Rank	Name	Prize	Pro Points
1	Kazuaki Arahori	$2,400	6
3	Mike Long	$1,200	4
5	Icaru Ishida	$800	3
7	Jin Okamoto	$800	3
9	Tomoya Tsushima	$500	2
11	Masashiro Kuroda	$500	2
13	Hitoshi Nakai	$500	2
15	Akira Asahara	$500	2
17	Yudai Yamasaki	$250	1
19	Kazuo Imura	$250	1
21	Akihiro Kashima	$250	1
22	Kenichi Fujita	$250	1
23	Brian Hegstad	$250	1
25	Hideki Nomichi	$250	1
26	Masayuki Higashino	$250	1
27	Chris Benafel	$250	1
29	Masatake Shimada	$250	1
30	Tsuyoshi Fujita	$250	1
31	Shinya Hirata	$250	1
33	Takatsugu Adachi		
34	Genki Taru		
35	Daniel Clegg		
37	Jinpei Hassaku		
39	Ryuichi Arita		
40	Taichi Takada		
41	Masaru Hanita		
42	Masahide Okuyama		
43	Tadashi Yokoyama		
44	Kentaro Yuasa		
45	Nicholas Jonathan Wong		
46	Michihisa Onoda		
47	Tsuyoshi Doyama		
48	Takeshi Ozawa		
49	Yuki Murakami		
50	Natsuki Abe		
51	Hiromi Matsuda		
52	Masaru Ota		
53	Yu Shinozaki		
54	Akihiro Shimizu		
55	Masao Sando		
56	Shinichi Sato		
57	Rintaro Yamasaki		
58	Tomonari Ohno		
59	Hiroshi Harada		
60	Tatsuo Yoshii		
61	Satoshi Kanda		
63	Kazuaki Saito		
64	Tetsuya Soma		

Grand Prix Houston

by Josh Bennett



Occurring so soon after New Year's Eve festivities and plagued by torrential rain, Grand Prix–Houston had a relatively small attendance compared with recent Grand Prix events. Only 272 competitors braved the weather and ravages of overindulgence to game at the year's first Grand Prix event.

Grand Prix–Houston was staged in the midst of "Miracle Gro" madness. A brainchild of mad genius Alan Comer, the Miracle Gro deck debuted at Grand Prix–Las Vegas, where Comer finished ninth on tiebreakers. The deck was revised by Mike Long at Grand Prix–Sendai (where he finished third), and his inclusion of Werebears was particularly key. After that, Gro seemed to be everywhere, dominating Qualifiers across Europe. Houston also marked the unveiling of "Super Gro," a Gro variant that splashed white for Mystic Enforcer and Swords to Plowshares to help it prevail in the mirror match. It also gave the deck a huge edge in the "Sligh" matchup, which had previously given Gro problems. Six Super Gro players went a combined 20-4-4 (discounting byes).

Nevertheless, regular Gro was everywhere, a fact that the four undefeated players on Day 1 had anticipated. These undefeated players included Ben Rubin and Ken Ho (playing Super Gro), William "Baby Huey" Jensen (playing "Antigro Oath"), and Bob Maher (playing Sligh).

Nearly all the pros in attendance advanced to Day 2, where there was a little bit of everything. Gro decks were twenty-five strong, but no fewer than fifteen deck types were present. As the day progressed, it seemed that only Gro and heavily metagamed decks were moving up in the ranks.

The top finishers of the day were both Miracle Gro players. Amateur Jonathan Job went 5-0-1 to sneak into the Top 8 from 52nd place. Alex Shvartsman duplicated the feat from 58th. Rubin, Maher, and Jensen all managed to stay at the top of the standings, and they were joined by Pro Tour heartthrob Brian Kibler, who played Super Gro.

In addition to the two Miracle Gro players, the two Super Gro players, and Sligh's Maher, there was Boston's Josh Smith. An amateur in title only, Smith scored two byes on rating, and brought with him a blue-black-green control deck designed to smash Gro in all its forms. Jonathan Pechon made the Top 8 with the same deck that earned him three byes the night before: "Junk."

Jensen's Oath was notable for its four main-deck Disrupts, and it ran Ancient Hydra and Morphling as its only creatures. In his sideboard were three copies of Roar of the Wurm, ready to be Intuitioned out at a moment's notice. He showed Job first hand what Gro-hate looked like in the quarterfinals. When Job mulliganed down to five in the second game, Huey asked the judge if it was unsporting to take a victory lap.

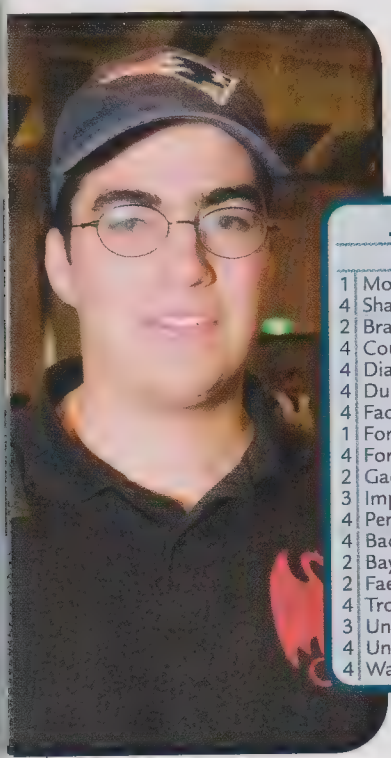
And so Huey ran smack into Brian Kibler. They had clashed in round 4, with Jensen emerging the victor. In the third game, it looked like he would repeat the feat, resolving an early Knowledge for four. The cards, however, were awful, and he couldn't fight off Kibler's second Mystic Enforcer. Having already smashed Maher in the quarterfinals, Kibler had avenged both of his Swiss losses.

In the other bracket, Rubin had dispatched Pechon after Pechon kept a questionable hand in the third game, and was squaring off against Smith, whose deck had done its job against Shvartsman's Miracle Gro. Brian Kibler sat at ringside and cheered for a Rubin victory and an all–Super Gro final. The match went to three games, but Smith advanced, ruining Kibler's plans.

The first two games of the final between Kibler and Smith were utter smashes. In the first, Smith left Kibler permanentless in the midgame before going on to win. Kibler took the second thanks to a pair of early Meddling Mages with appropriate backup. It looked like the final game could go either way.

Game 3 showed that it simply was not Kibler's day. Smith's draw was unbelievable. He led with double Duresses, stripping Kibler's hand of countermagic and letting him tap out for a third-turn Meddling Mage. When Kibler tried Swords to Plowshares, Smith had the Force. Soon, Kibler was buried under Smith's card advantage.

Smith was mild mannered to the very end, having played the nerve-wracking elimination rounds without noticeable jitters. He did manage to smile for the cameras when he received his trophy, as he looked to Pro Tour–Osaka for his next chance at success.



Joshua Smith

- Extended -

1	Morphling
4	Shadowmage Infiltrator
2	Brainstorm
4	Counterspell
4	Diabolic Edict
4	Duress
4	Fact or Fiction
1	Forbid
4	Force of Will
2	Gaea's Blessing
3	Impulse
4	Pernicious Deed
4	Bad River
2	Bayou
2	Faerie Conclave
4	Tropical Island
3	Underground River
4	Underground Sea
4	Wasteland

sideboard

2	Annul
2	Disrupt
2	Hydroblast
2	Misdirection
3	Powder Keg
4	Submerge

Rank	Name	Prize	Pro Points
1	Joshua Smith	$2,400	6
2	Brian Kibler	$1,700	4
3	William Jensen	$1,200	3
4	Ben Rubin	$1,000	2
5	Robert Maher	$800	1
6	Alex Shvartsman	$800	1
7	Jonathan Pechon	$800	1
8	Jonathan Job	$800	1
9	Matt Frazier	$500	2
10	Alan Comer	$500	2
11	Phil Freneau	$500	2
12	Doug Tice	$500	2
13	Andrew Stokinger	$500	2
14	Ken Krouner	$500	2
15	Zvi Mowshowitz	$500	2
16	Daniel OMS	$500	2
17	Alex Borteh	$250	1
18	Jeff Lambert	$250	1
19	Daniel Flood	$250	1
20	Robert Howell	$250	1
21	Chris Benafel	$250	1
22	Stephen Miller	$250	1
23	Bill Macey	$250	1
24	Justin Hohenstein	$250	1
25	Trent Jones	$250	1
26	Mauro Bongiovanni	$250	1
27	Ben Stark	$250	1
28	Morgan Douglass	$250	1
29	Tom Martell	$250	1
30	Ken Ho	$250	1
31	Bryan Hubble	$250	1
32	Tony Menzer	$250	1
33	Lan Ho		
34	Benjamin Ainsworth		
35	Melissa DeTora		
36	Michael Pustilnik		
37	Ryan Ellis		
38	Chris Warren		
39	Steven OMS		
40	Dal Austin		
41	Fletcher Peatross		
42	Brennan Hays		
43	Eric Taylor		
44	Mitchell Tamblyn		
45	Jason Silapachai		
46	Richard Zacek		
47	Brian Hegstad		
48	Peter Szigeti		
49	Travis Duggan		
50	Tom Willoughby		
51	Ken Pender		
52	Kathy Nemati		
53	Evan Coffey		
54	Geno Buffi		
55	David Bass		
56	Adam Clinkenbeard		
57	Taylor Williams		
58	John Shuler		
59	Mikhail Karasoulis		
60	CJ Wostal		
61	Chase Lakey		
62	Michael Musser		
63	Chad Jones		
64	Miki Urban		

Grand Prix Lisbon

by Rui Oliveira

As the organizing crew got ready to pack up the last few tables, and the two tired finalists made their best efforts to smile for the last few photos, a silence fell over the few remaining players at the site. It was over. Twenty minutes before, everyone was eager to get it over with, but now everyone seemed sad. The 100th **Magic** Grand Prix event was finally over. It ended in a diametrically different way from how it started. On Saturday morning, the whole site was noisily taken over by 670 players trying to squeeze the last few drops of excitement from an already emotion-packed season. Extended was going out with a bang and everyone wanted a piece of it.

Eight rounds, with most 6-2 players not making the cut, is a tough hurdle to clear even with three byes. Gary Wise, for example, missed the cut by finishing in the nerve-racking 65th spot, followed by Antoine Ruel (who won last year). Further down the table was Pro Tour and Masters Series winner Michael Pustilnik. On the other end of the spectrum, Alex Shvartsman and local Pro Tour player Tiago Chan topped the table with eight wins each.

Throughout Day 1, to celebrate the 100th Grand Prix event, every match at table 100 was a feature match (with the players of each match each receiving a bottle of champagne). Carlos Sanchez Brito, who finished in 100th place, got 100 boosters, and the site turned into a party when the staff started raining free boosters from the balconies!

Oath was the talk of the tournament as Team Godzilla returned to its best form, and "Miracle Grow" players in the Top 8 expected to be crushed. Patrick Mello, Kai Budde, and Ben Ronaldson each finished in the Top 32.

The Top 8 was all anyone could hope for. It included the greatest player in the game, Kai Budde; reigning World Champion, Tom van de Logt; the untouchable Top 8 record holder, Alex Shvartsman; and Jelger Wiegersma, Olivier Ruel, Stefano Fiore, Patrick Mello, and the crowd favorite, Marcio Carvalho of Portugal. As far as decks went, van de Logt and Carvalho played "Sligh"; Ruel, Shvartsman, and Fiore played Grow variants; and Jelger, Budde, and Mello played Oath.

In the quarterfinals, Budde survived a bad matchup with van de Logt, who for once wasn't able to showcase his topdecking skills. Mello crushed Shvartsman, and Carvalho trampled over Fiore before Ruel defeated Wiegersma.

Although Carvalho's Sligh seemed the ideal foil for Budde's Oath, the Portuguese could do little against the German's knack for coming up with an answer for every situation. In the end, Budde survived his second-consecutive Sligh matchup of the Top 8.

At the other table, Mello and Ruel battled, with Mello finally coming through to set up a scary final: an Oath mirror match. The first game lasted over an hour and ended with Budde getting decked.

The two sideboarded openly in an effort to make the second and possible third games as fast as possible.

In their rush to get through the match, Budde and Mello forgot to take out their Morphlings. Inevitably, they got into a Morphling standoff in the second game, which also included recursion with Gaea's Blessing. Eventually, Budde evened the score.

They each tried to speed things up even further in the third game by mulliganing down to zero! Despite a deadlock, with midnight quickly approaching Budde pulled out the win. After all, he had to do it fast: he is unbeatable on Sunday, not Monday.

With that match, the Extended Grand Prix season came to an end. It began with King Donate, Oath, and Sligh dead. It ended with Oath winning, Sligh returning, and Donate buried.

Kai Budde

- Extended -

1	Morphling
1	Spike Feeder
1	Spike Weaver
4	Brainstorm
4	Counterspell
3	Fact of Fiction
1	Forbid
4	Force or Will
2	Gaea's Blessing
4	Impulse
4	Oath of Druids
3	Powder Keg
4	Swords to Plowshares
1	Adarkar Wastes
4	Flood Plain
1	Savannah
2	Treetop Village
4	Tropical Island
4	Tundra
4	Volcanic Island
4	Wasteland

sideboard

2	Aura Blast
4	Call of the Herd
3	Hydroblast
1	Powder Keg
3	Pyroblast
2	Samite Ministration

Rank	Name	Prize	Pro Points
1	Kai Budde	$2,400	6
2	Patrick Mello	$1,700	4
3	Olivier Ruel	$1,200	4
4	Marcio Carvalho	$1,000	4
5	Stefano Fiore	$800	3
6	Alex Shvartsman	$800	3
7	Tom van de Logt	$800	3
8	Jelger Wiegersma	$800	3
9	Johan Sadeghpour	$500	2
10	Marco Blume	$500	2
11	Gabriel Nassif	$500	2
12	Kiko Jimenez	$500	2
13	Jose Perez	$500	2
14	Tiago Chan	$500	2
15	Daniele Canavesi	$500	2
16	Eugeny Okin	$500	2
17	Paulo Cardona	$250	1
18	Victor Cabrera Martinez	$250	1
19	Massimo Guarino	$250	1
20	Norberto Giusti	$250	1
21	Poya Nobari	$250	1
22	Benjamin Caumes	$250	1
23	Frederico Bastos	$250	1
24	Dirk Baberowski	$250	1
25	Marat Asanov	$250	1
26	Eduardo Echague	$250	1
27	Kuniyoshi Ishii	$250	1
28	Helmut Summersberger	$250	1
29	Pedro Marguenda	$250	1
30	Svante Landgraf	$250	1
31	Ben Ronaldson	$250	1
32	Jesus Bernabeu-Edo	$250	1
33	Miguel Correia		
34	Stan van der Velden		
35	Guilhe Ferreira		
36	Jonathan Hernandez		
37	Omar Lopez		
38	Jonathan Martin		
39	Joao Osorio		
40	Alexandre Braga		
41	Roberto Saavedra		
42	José Mondesar		
43	Gerardo Cabrero		
44	Helder Coelho		
45	Luis Batista		
46	Alfonso Díaz		
47	Andre Cunha		
48	Frederico Costa		
49	Helio Felix		
50	Marco Duarte		
51	Miguel Tafula		
52	Joao Candido		
53	Rui Mariani		
54	David Beduzzi		
55	Nuno Costa		
56	Raul Sanchez		
57	Hugo Manteigueiro		
58	Sergio Perez		
59	João Martins		
60	Luis Sousa		
61	Emilio Campos		
62	Rodrigo Caseiro		
63	Pedro Silva		
64	Felipe Saavedra		

Grand Prix Heidelberg

by Craig Jones

The sleepy university town of Heidelberg, Germany, was the site of the first major tournament to use the *Torment* set. The venue was the grand Heidelberg Stadthalle and certainly looked classy with balconies and chandeliers. It was also large, a factor that turned out to be important, as a massive 880 players turned up for registration—making Heidelberg the largest European Grand Prix event to date and the fourth-largest in history. The majority of the field was from Germany, but there were also plenty of high-profile U.S. players like Alex Shvartsman, Zvi Mowshowitz, Brian Kibler, and Chris Benafel. The field looked as tough as one found at any Pro Tour event.

Fortunately, there was space, with tables upstairs on the balconies required to accommodate the entire field. There was an inevitable delay in registering the unexpected number of decks, but as a whole the tournament ran smoothly, with Day 1 finishing a little after midnight. As predicted, black made a big impact, with the new Nightmare creatures especially pivotal. One feature match pretty much summed up their power, as a hapless Mowshowitz ended a game with most of his cards sitting under Patrick Mello's army of Faceless Butchers and Mesmeric Fiends.

By the end of Day 1, only three players had perfect records, as Jelger Wiegersma, Laurent Janiak, and Thomas Preyer had fought their way to the top of the standings. With such a large field, it was inevitable that there would be high-profile casualties, and a number of American players like Mowshowitz, Shvartsman, and Dan Clegg had their journeys end early. In an interesting twist due to a software glitch, the nationality of everyone who failed to make Day 2 went up as Italian.

Germany had a strong presence on Day 2, but the day belonged to the Dutch. Three Dutch players—Wiegersma, Kamiel Cornelissen, and Joost Vollebregt—fought their way into the Top 8, while Germany had to settle for Patrick Mello as its only representative. It was Vollebregt's third Grand Prix Top 8 in a row. Making somewhat of a comeback was the Austrian, Preyer. The Top 8 was rounded out by Ukrainian Yuri Kolomeyko, Frenchman Franck Canu, and American Benafel—all in all, a fairly tough final table.

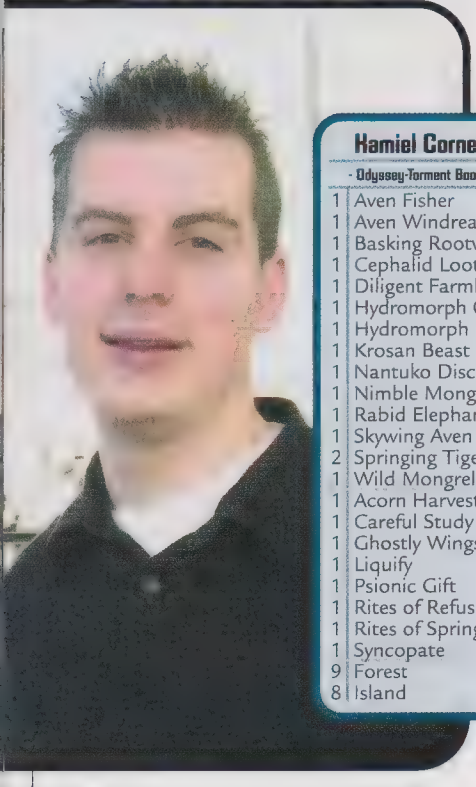
The boosters didn't match the quality of the players, and there were fairly slim pickings for the majority. Cornelissen came out okay with a strong blue-green deck with plenty of fliers and creatures that got huge with threshold, and Preyer's black-red deck also looked powerful. They were the fortunate ones. Mello was left wishing he still had his deck from Day 1, as his blue-white-black deck wasn't much better than an average sealed deck. Poor Wiegersma was left to work with a pile of mediocre red, white, and green cards. Half of the Top 8 ended up with three-color decks, which might indicate that most of the pros still hadn't quite adapted to drafting with *Torment*.

The three-color decks didn't do so well, as Preyer swept past Mello, and Cornelissen's fat creatures beat down Kolomeyko's blue-black-red deck. After losing the first game quickly, Wiegersma put up a fight in his match versus Benafel, and games two and three descended into massive creature standoffs until Benafel finally got enough fliers through. Canu was the only three-color survivor, with his green-black-red deck having too many bombs, such as Kamahl, Pit Fighter; Carrion Wurm; and Squirrel Nest, for Vollebregt's blue-black deck to handle.

Preyer found Cornelissen's 8/8 Krosan Beast too much to handle, and Canu succumbed to Benafel's prored fliers—although Canu provided much amusement by using photos of Benafel to represent Squirrel tokens.

Some predicted that the final would continue through Monday afternoon and that both players would finish second: Both Benafel and Cornelissen have a reputation for slow, cautious play, and both players have a history of second-place finishes. There had to be a winner, though, and the large fliers and threshold beats in Cornelissen's green-blue deck were too much for Benafel. Kamiel Cornelissen had finally taken the major tournament title that had eluded him for so long.

Rank	Name	Prize	Pro Points
1	Kamiel Cornelissen	$2,400	6
2	Chris Benafel	$1,700	4
3	Franck Canu	$1,200	3
4	Thomas Preyer	$1,000	2
5	Jelger Wiegersma	$800	2
6	Patrick Mello	$800	2
7	Yuri Kolomeyko	$800	2
8	Joost Vollebregt	$800	2
9	Jim Herold	$500	1
10	Kung-Chieh Wang	$500	1
11	Johan Sadeghipour	$500	1
12	Frederic Courtois	$500	1
13	Bram Snepvangers	$500	1
14	Vladimir Komanicky	$500	1
15	Stefan Kozak	$500	1
16	Pierre Malherbaud	$500	1
17	Boris Engels	$250	1
18	Holger Meinecke	$250	1
19	Rickard Österberg	$250	1
20	Wolfgang Eder	$250	1
21	Jens Krause	$250	1
22	Jake Smith	$250	1
23	Felix Schneiders	$250	1
24	Alexsei Kotkov	$250	1
25	Nikolas Nygaard	$250	1
26	Tom van de Logt	$250	1
27	Kai Budde	$250	1
28	Jens Thoren	$250	1
29	Ulrik Tarp	$250	1
30	Benn Christensen	$250	1
31	Tore Skålevik	$250	1
32	Oyvind Harding	$250	1
33	Reinhard Blech		
34	Laurent Janiak		
35	Michael Pustilnik		
36	Noah Boeken		
37	Artem Kozachuk		
38	Georg Sheljasov		
39	Murat Sezi		
40	Jan Holland		
41	Dirk Baberowski		
42	Anton Jonsson		
43	Jens Kittl		
44	René Pech		
45	Thomas Bisballe		
46	Fabio Reinhardt		
47	Dalibor Szegho		
48	Christian Strebel		
49	Janosch Kuhn		
50	Alexander Blumke		
51	Frank Karsten		
52	Stefan Jedlicka		
53	Nikolaj Wolkoff		
54	Carsten Pipke		
55	Heiko Lehnert		
56	Andreas Heim		
57	Daniel Zink		
58	Marco Blume		
59	Brock Parker		
60	Steven O'Mahoney-Schwartz		
61	Michael Nielsen		
62	Oliver Braun		
63	Jacques Bittner		
64	Martin Zuercher		



Kamiel Cornelissen

- Odyssey-Torment Booster Draft -

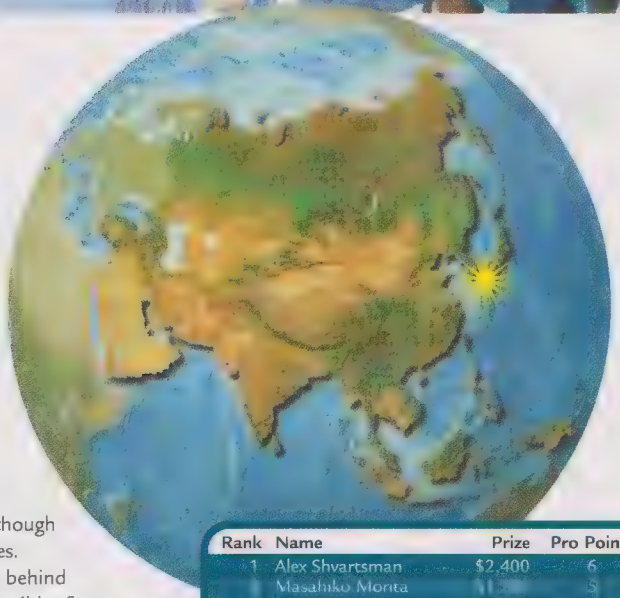
1	Aven Fisher
1	Aven Windreader
1	Basking Rootwalla
1	Cephalid Looter
1	Diligent Farmhand
1	Hydromorph Guardian
1	Hydromorph Gull
1	Krosan Beast
1	Nantuko Disciple
1	Nimble Mongoose
1	Rabid Elephant
1	Skywing Aven
2	Springing Tiger
1	Wild Mongrel
1	Acorn Harvest
1	Careful Study
1	Ghostly Wings
1	Liquify
1	Psionic Gift
1	Rites of Refusal
1	Rites of Spring
1	Syncopate
9	Forest
8	Island

sideboard

1	Aboshan's Desire
1	Bash to Bits
1	Cephalid Aristocrat
2	Coral Net
1	Dematerialize
1	Druid Lyrist
1	Dwell on the Past
1	Earth Rift
1	Hypnox
1	Innocent Blow
1	Invigorating Falls
1	Krosan Constrictor
1	Leaf Dancer
1	Sandstone Deadfall
1	Skull Fracture
1	Words of Wisdom

Grand Prix Fukuoka

by Josh Bennett



With just 428 competitors, Grand Prix–Fukuoka was not up to the impressive attendance standard for Japanese events. Perhaps the event was experiencing a backlash from those huge figures, with players daunted about playing in an event with over 1,000 competitors.

Foreign attendance was also down, and the only familiar pro faces smiling out of the trenches belonged to Mike Long and Alex Shvartsman. All of Japan's brightest lights were there, though: Rookie of the Year Katsuhiro Mori and APAC Champion Jin Okamoto were both excited about the mighty cards they opened. They eased into Day 2 alongside familiar faces Satoshi Nakamura and two-time Grand Prix winner Masayuki Higashino.

Of course, drafting with the *Torment* set was still a relatively new endeavor. That meant that those in the know would be taking their tables for a ride. And so it was with Shvartsman and Long, who went 3-0 in their first pods, as did Tsuyoshi Fujita, who overcame rumors that his Tokyo performance was a fluke. He did so despite struggling through Day 1 with a card pool that forced him into a four-color build.

Once all those masterminds were brought together in the top pod for the second draft, however, it was bedlam. After the second pack, four players in a row were playing black! This was all to the chagrin of Mike Long, who sat at the end of this crazy train. He went completely off the rails when the *Torment* packs were opened, with blue cards flowing like wine—and him trying to piece together the scraps of his red-black deck. In the middle of the pack, Masashiro Kuroda managed to avoid the same fate. The famed Japanese *Sideboard* reporter went 2-0-1 to finish the day at the top of the Swiss.

There Kuroda joined a star-studded cast. The spectators agreed it was one of the strongest Top 8s Japan had ever seen. Kuroda stood next to Tsuyoshi Fujita, Alex Shvartsman, and Itaru Ishida. Also in the fight were Yusuke Sasaki, Shuhei Nakamura, Masahiko Morita, and amateur Jun Ishihara, who was gunning to make this the third-consecutive Japanese Grand Prix to be won by an amateur. The crowd couldn't agree on a favorite. There was simply too much talent.

That meant that Ishida would face Shvartsman, while Morita would square off against Ishihara. The amateur's inexperience showed in the third game, when Morita forced him into making bad decisions. Shvartsman's confidence about facing Ishida was rewarded, though their match went the full three games.

In the final, the spectators were behind Morita 100 percent. A noted deckbuilder from Osaka, Morita had also appeared in the final of Grand Prix–Shizuoka, but was upset there by amateur Kohei Yamadaya. Shvartsman was his chance for revenge.

Shvartsman went with a solid blue-black deck that splashed green for only two cards: Rabid Elephant and Narcissism. Shvartsman couldn't say enough about Narcissism, calling it "better than Masticore!" Morita had black-green, and also heeded the impulse to splash—red for Shower of Coals. Where Shvartsman had dual lands and Eggs to balance his mana, Morita was stuck with only Far Wanderings and a lone "sac" land.

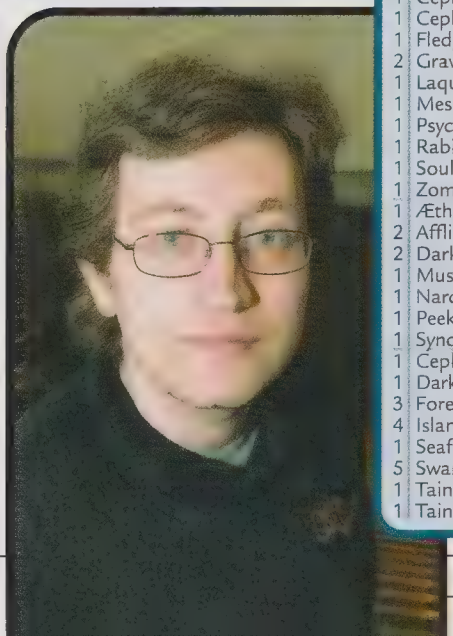
It looked like Shvartsman would take the first game easily thanks to Narcissism, but Morita had plenty of creatures and a Nostalgic Dreams to get back Muscle Burst and Rabid Elephant. Shvartsman had to sacrifice Narcissism to stay in the game, and Gravegouger and two lands couldn't fight off Morita's swarm. The second game was sheer brutality: A bit of tempo, a bit of Narcissism, and Laquatus's Champion, and Shvartsman rolled to the victory.

Shvartsman had the upper hand early in the final game. A handful of tricks combined with Aven Windreader and Soul Scourge had Morita on the defensive. At 1 life, Morita drew his sixth land and played Morbid Hunger on the Scourge, which brought him back to 7 life. It looked like Shvartsman was running out of gas. Morita then played Nostalgic Dreams, rescuing the Hunger and Shower of Coals! The crowd gasped. The Hunger took down the Windreader and left Shvartsman at 4. Suddenly it looked like Morita would take the championship.

Shvartsman knocked his deck.

Balshan Collaborator! The crowd couldn't believe it. Morita had no answer for the pumpable creature. He looked at the top card of his deck and extended his hand to Shvartsman.

This was Shvartsman's third Grand Prix win, placing him in an elite group. It also adds to his mystique as the King of the Asian Grand Prix, as two of his Grand Prix wins have come in Japan. Expect to see Shvartsman in many more Japanese Top 8s in the future.



Alex Shvartsman

- Odyssey-Torment Booster Draft -

1	Aven Windreader
1	Balshan Collaborator
1	Boneshard Slasher
1	Cephalid Looter
1	Cephalid Scout
1	Fledgling Imp
2	Gravegouger
1	Laquatus's Champion
1	Mesmeric Fiend
1	Psychatog
1	Rabid Elephant
1	Soul Scourge
1	Zombie Assassin
1	Æther Burst
2	Afflict
2	Darkwater Egg
1	Muscle Burst
1	Narcissism
1	Peek
1	Syncopate
1	Cephalid Coliseum
1	Darkwater Catacombs
3	Forest
4	Island
1	Seafloor Debris
5	Swamp
1	Tainted Isle
1	Tainted Wood

Rank	Name	Prize	Pro Points
1	Alex Shvartsman	$2,400	6
	Masahiko Morita		5
	Itaru Ishida		4
			4
	Masashiro Kuroda	$800	3
			3
	Yusuke Sasaki	$800	3
			3
	Masahiro Kora	$500	2
	Jun Nobushita		2
	Keiichiro Kuroda	$500	2
			2
	Mike Long	$500	2
			2
	Takemasa Moori	$500	2
	Taro Hasegawa		2
	Masataka Mat...	$250	1
	Jin Okamoto		
	Kazuya Hirabayashi	$250	
	Osamu Fujita		
	Akihiro Kashiro	$250	
	Hiroshi Kikuchi		
	Shinpei Hasegawa	$250	
	Tsuyoshi Ikeda	$250	
	Izuoma Suzuki	$250	
	Hideki Tsumura	$250	
	Akihiro Shimizu	$250	
	Yumihiro Hata		
	Takayuki Nagaoka		
	Tatsuya Ueda		
	Yo Okada		
	Hideki Kobayashi		
	Akihiko Takeuchi		
	Kazumasa Ishii		
	Yuta Tamashiro		
	Yuki Murakami		
	Tadao Kusakabe		
	Kazuto Arano		
	Koichiro Mori		
	Yoichiro Yamadaya		
	Hiroshi Hamasaki		
	Takeshi Miyazaki		
	Ryuta Imai		

Grand Prix Tampa

by Randy Buehler

Sol Malka has called himself "The People's Champion" for years, and at Grand Prix–Tampa he finally put his money where his mouth is. Well, I guess that was actually Wizards of the Coast's money. In any case, Florida's first Grand Prix event was the first big-money tournament in North America in which *Torment* was legal, and 410 players showed up to try out the new set. The black in *Torment* defined the tournament, and Malka's winning deck was an aggressive black-red design sporting a pair of Pardic Collaborators among its ten main-deck *Torment* cards.

Never before has a **Magic** set centered specifically on one color. *Torment* clearly caught players by surprise, though most seemed to embrace the new challenge. Not everyone who did well played black, but everyone had to at least think about it. During Sealed Deck play on Day 1, eighty-five percent of the field chose to run at least some black cards in their decks. (Black-green with a splash of red was the most popular combination, followed closely by black-blue with a splash of whatever was handy.) Interestingly, only four of the six players who posted 7-0 records ran black. Weirder still, five of the six ran green (though, to be fair, two merely splashed it). Even though green was radically shorted on cards in *Torment,* it still got one really good common—Basking Rootwalla—and the green in *Odyssey* is *so* good that it carries the color despite *Torment.*

Day 2 was a bit less black-dominated because the card pool for Booster Draft is only thirty-three percent *Torment*, as opposed to the forty percent figure for Sealed Deck. Black-blue was the most sought after deck, and the players who were fighting only three others for black seemed pretty happy, but red-green remained a viable archetype. A couple of people even did well by running a very dangerous but very rewarding metagame gambit: forcing white and trying to set themselves up as the only white drafters at their tables.

The Top 8 somehow wound up with only three players drafting black—and the draft is where Malka won his first major title. He situated himself in black-red and was rewarded in *Torment,* as quite a few black and red cards got passed to him. He built the perfect deck to take advantage of Barbarian Outcast, and his opponents never seemed to have any answers for his Collaborators. He also found time to draft power cards like Possessed Barbarian, Faceless Butcher, and Cabal Torturer while still squeezing in Mesmeric Fiend and a pair of Unhinges. Many pros shy away from Unhinge, but Malka has always liked card advantage, so those two main-deck Unhinges shouldn't surprise anyone.

Several local pros did their best to defend their home turf. Rising Pro Tour star Antonio De Rosa went undefeated in the Swiss, but he lost a close red-green mirror match to another rising star—Canadian Jeff Cunningham—in the quarterfinals. Team Goodfellas member Koby Kennison made his second Grand Prix Top 8, but couldn't get by Malka in the semifinals. Malka actually grew up in Florida and still lives in the Southeast, so when he sat down against a Canadian in the final, he did have the home field advantage.

Grand Prix–Tampa was also the first tournament in which the members of the **Magic** Colony all played together. All eight of the pros who moved in together so they could practice for Pro Tour–Osaka made the trip. While only Cunningham made the Top 8, three others missed it on tiebreakers, finishing 10th, 11th, and 12th. A fifth member also finished in the money.

Only fourteen amateurs made Day 2, so the Amateur award went all the way down to 66th place. In the end, Adam Racht walked home with almost as much money as Malka—pocketing the $1,500 first-place Amateur award in addition to his $800 for finishing seventh.

All in all, it was a fine Grand Prix event. The venue, the staff, the format, and the players all exceeded expectations.

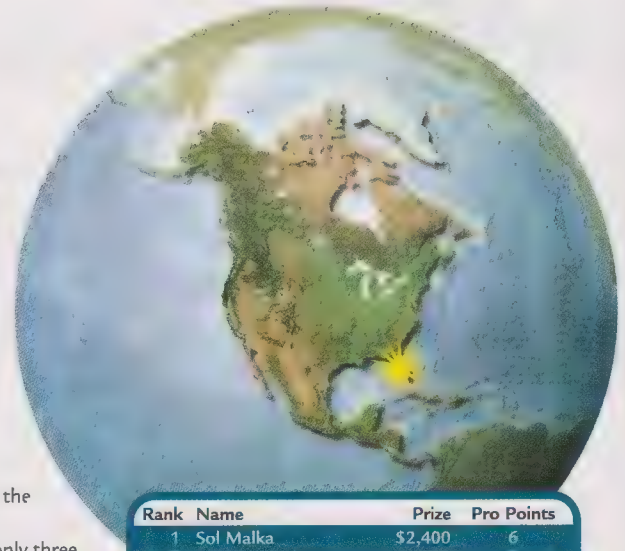
Sol Malka

- Odyssey-Torment Booster -

1	Anarchist
1	Barbarian Lunatic
3	Barbarian Outcast
1	Cabal Tortuerer
1	Chainflinger
1	Crypt Creeper
1	Dwarven Strike Force
1	Faceless Butcher
1	Gravedigger
1	Mesmeric Fiend
2	Pardic Collaborator
1	Possessed Barbarian
1	Sadistic Hypnotist
1	Afflict
1	Firebolt
1	Liquid Fire
1	Morbid Hunger
1	Thermal Blast
2	Unhinge
2	Barbarian Ring
7	Mountain
8	Swamp

sideboard

1	Accelerate
1	Acceptable Losses
1	Cabal Inquisitor
1	Centaur Garden
1	Cephalid Aristocrat
1	Dedicated Martyr
1	Filthy Cur
1	Frightcrawler
1	Innocent Blood
1	Invigorating Falls
1	Kamahl's Desire
1	Last Rites
1	Mind Burst
1	Mindslicer
1	Petrified Field
1	Rabid Elephant
1	Seize the Day
1	Screams of the Damned
1	Tainted Field
1	Tireless Tribe



Rank	Name	Prize	Pro Points
1	Sol Malka	$2,400	6
2	Jeff Cunningham	$1,700	4
3	Koby Kennison	$1,200	3
4	Mike Emmert	$1,000	2
5	Antonino De Rosa	$800	2
6	Brian Kibler	$800	2
7	Adam Racht	$800	2
8	Adam Prokopin	$800	2
9	Bill Stead	$500	1
10	Jeff Fung	$500	1
11	Ken Ho	$500	1
12	Chris Benafel	$500	1
13	Jonathan Somne	$500	1
14	Trevor Blackwell	$500	1
15	Frank Hernandez	$500	1
16	Nick Eisel	$250	1
17	Noah Weil	$250	1
18	Derek Starleaf	$250	1
19	Mitchell Tamblyn	$250	1
20	Laurie Dunning	$250	1
21	Steven OMS	$250	1
22	Daniel Clegg	$250	1
23	Eric Kesselman	$250	1
24	Joshua Smith	$250	1
25	Michael Turian	$250	1
26	Jon Stern	$250	1
27	Adam Levy	$250	1
28	Terry Tsang	$250	1
29	Russell Pippin	$250	1
30	Brian Davis	$250	1
31	Eric Taylor	$250	1
32	Donovan Harvie	$250	1
33	Jonathan Becker		
34	Tammy Ehrhart		
35	Lee Steht		
36	Ed Linskey		
37	Eugene Harvey		
38	Darwin Kastle		
39	Eric Froehlich		
40	Robert Dougherty		
41	Alan Cardoso		
42	Bob Stead		
43	Christopher Greene		
44	Alex Shvartsman		
45	Aaron Breider		
46	Ben Rotheman		
47	Laura Karem		
48	Joseph Reed		
49	Gerardo Godinez Estrada		
50	Kevin Mercier		
51	Jake Ryder		
52	Brock Parker		
53	Ben Rubin		
54	Brandon Rutter		
55	Lance Loden		
56	Tony Tsai		
57	Zev Gurwitz		
58	Jeff Emmert		
59	Alex Borteh		
60	Sergey Napelenok		
61	Matt Schmaltz		
62	Timothy Aten		
63	Chuck Littlefield		
64	Max McGuffin		

Antwerp

by Craig Jones

Grand Prix–Antwerp was effectively a local tournament for most of the event's organizers—the venue, Hangar 26, is only ten minutes from the Wizards of the Coast Antwerp office. Located near the dockyard area of the city, Hangar 26 is a converted warehouse overlooking the Schelde River.

After the monster turnout of Grand Prix–Heidelberg, a more modest 615 players turned up from all over Europe. Surprisingly, none of the high-profile U.S. players chose to attend. Maybe the upcoming Pro Tour–Osaka had left them with more important considerations to focus on.

Belgian hopes rested in the hands of players like Jan Doise, Gert Coeckelbergh, and National Champion Sinan Bolca. Opposing them were very strong Dutch, German, and French contingents. Coeckelbergh's tournament came unstuck early on when he chose to turn down his round 1 bye for the chance to gain ratings points—he lost because his deck was fairly poor. Doise, on the other hand, had a number of bomb rares and smashed his way into Day 2.

At the end of the day, the players with perfect records were Frank Karsten of the Netherlands, German National Champion Daniel Zink, and Gabriel Nassif of France. The majority of Day 2 competitors came from those countries, but Belgium was still fighting with six players in the mix.

The prediction for Booster Draft was that everyone would end up gunning for black. But the *Torment* boosters had other ideas, and the top table for the first draft on Day 2 somehow managed to end up with four players in a row—Sigurd Eskeland, Mattias Jorstedt, Nassif, and Zink—fighting for white.

Day 2 also had its share of heartbreaks, as early tournament leader Karsten conceded to fellow countryman Arjan van Leeuwen when he was 11-0—leaving them both needing draws to advance to the Top 8. Unfortunately, the pairings never gave Karsten a chance to do this, and two losses later the Top 8 was out of his reach. Amateur player Johan Kennes, in only his sixth DCI-sanctioned Limited tournament, kept the host nation's hopes alive. After beating Pro Tour–San Diego Champion Farid Meraghni in the final round, Kennes looked to have booked a place in the Top 8. Unfortunately, none of the other results went his way, and he was squeezed into ninth place on tiebreakers. At least he could console himself with the $1,500 prize for being the highest-finishing amateur.

After the dust had settled, none of the leaders from Day 1 had managed to make the Top 8. After being defeated by Zink twice already over the weekend, Jorstedt won their third matchup to advance to the Top 8. Joining him was Frenchman Florent Jeudon, who finally stepped out of the shadows of his fellow Black Ops teammates (the Ruel brothers) to post a high individual finish. The Dutch continued to show they have great depth, as former Grand Prix winner Jos Schreurs and van Leeuwen earned places at the final table. By far the most successful nation was Germany, as Christoph Lippert, Wolfgang Eder, Dirk Baberowski, and—surprise—Kai Budde battled in from the draft portion. Would Budde win yet another title?

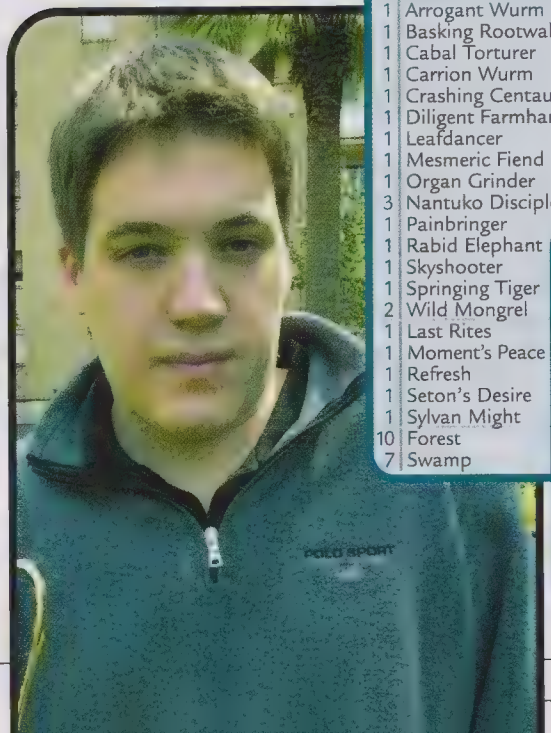
Was there any ever doubt?

Baberowski's black-white-blue deck gave him a couple of terrible draws, and Jeudon's green-black deck ran over him in short order. The unorthodox blue-red strategy that had been so useful for Jorstedt in the previous draft proved too much for Lippert's black-red deck. Eder won the control matchup, as his white-blue-black deck took down van Leeuwen's blue-white deck.

But the day belonged to Budde, as his monstrous double-Wild Mongrel, triple-Nantuko Disciple green-black deck smashed Schreurs and Eder in quick succession, setting up a final match with Jeudon. Both had similar decks, which was surprising because they drafted next to each other.

Game 1 was a close race before Budde's Moment's Peace tripped the Frenchman up at the end. Game 2 was a massacre, as the German "Juggernaut" dissected Jeudon's hand with Mesmeric Fiend and Last Rites before top-decking Sylvan Might to end the hapless Frenchman's challenge a turn too soon.

Antwerp was an incredible sixth Grand Prix title for Kai Budde—an accomplishment further solidifying the feeling that, at the moment, the rest of the world is playing for second place.



Kai Budde

- Odyssey-Torment Booster Draft -

1	Arrogant Wurm
1	Basking Rootwalla
1	Cabal Torturer
1	Carrion Wurm
1	Crashing Centaur
1	Diligent Farmhand
1	Leafdancer
1	Mesmeric Fiend
1	Organ Grinder
3	Nantuko Disciple
1	Painbringer
1	Rabid Elephant
1	Skyshooter
1	Springing Tiger
2	Wild Mongrel
1	Last Rites
1	Moment's Peace
1	Refresh
1	Seton's Desire
1	Sylvan Might
10	Forest
7	Swamp

sideboard

1	Æther Burst
1	Auramancer
1	Barbarian Outcast
1	Boneshard Slasher
1	Carrion Rats
1	Cartographer
1	Cephalid Scout
1	Decompose
1	Deep Reconnaissance
1	Druid Lyrist
1	Innocent Blood
1	Kamahl's Desire
1	Krosan Constrictor
1	Liquid Fire
2	Liquify
1	Nantuko Calmer
1	Psychotic Haze
1	Skull Fracture
1	Unhinge
2	Zombie Cannibal

Rank	Name	Prize	Pro Points
1	Kai Budde	$2,400	6
	Florent Jeudon	$1,700	
	Mattias Jorstedt	$1,200	
	Wolfgang Eder	$1,000	
	Arjan van Leeuwen	$800	
	Christoph Lippert	$800	
	Jos Schreurs	$800	
	Dirk Baberowski		
	Johan Kennes	$500	
	Frank Karsten		
	Daniel Zink	$500	
	Gabriel Nassif		
	Kamiel Cornelissen	$500	
	Franck Canu		
	Sylvain Lenoux	$500	
	Martin Cedercrantz		
	Victor van den Broek	$250	
	Felix Schneiders		
	Kurt Verbinnen	$250	
	Albert Alsharnn		
	Farid Meraghni	$250	
	Patrick Mello		
	Jim Herold	$250	
	Damien Reaubourg		
	Jens Thoren	$250	
	Jelger Wiegersma		
	Alexander Witt	$250	
	Noah Boeken		
	Bernd Da Costa Cabral	$250	
	Fabio Reinhardt		
	Niklas Eriksson	$250	
	Hans Joachim Hoeh	$250	
	Vladimir Komanicky		
	Dennis Schmitz		
	Joost Vollebregt		
	Kevin Desprez		
	Han Tesselaar		
	Wilfried Ranque		
	Niklaus Hug		
	Sigurd Eskeland		
	Daniel Steinsdörfer		
	Robert Will		
	Bernd Brendenmuhl		
	Johann Salin		
	Saul Aguado		
	Rutger Born		
	Henk Jan Geuze		
	Tom van de Logt		
	Simon Hocken		
	Benoit Leviez		
	Jan Doise		
	Marco Blume		
	Petr Nahodil		
	Jaroslav Sita		
	Michael Müller		
	Ben Dr		
	Tomas Kreisa		
	Ben Ronaldson		
	Laurent Bernard		
	Pascal Haberkorn		
	Vincent Lemoine		
	Torben Twiefel		
	Laurent Jamak		
	Geir Bakke		

Erhnam Djinn

Flametongue Meets His Match

by Dave Price

Since the Magic game's earliest days, certain creatures have been iconic. Many Magic players can remember the awe they felt when they first laid eyes on a Shivan Dragon, or when they traded for their first Serra Angel. Force of Nature was every green player's dream, and Nightmares were the stuff of legend. The popular creatures were easily recognizable Magic symbols, highly prized by players and collectors alike.

The balance of power among Magic icons shifts with the times, as old favorites fade and young upstarts take their places. A large surge in competitive play dimmed the romance of huge creatures in favor of efficiency. With the constant evolution of sets comes changes to power level and strategy, and sometimes the old guard simply can't keep up. Morphling dethroned Mahamoti Djinn in a heartbeat, and Jackal Pup picked up the proverbial torch from Shivan Dragon, as players realized the sheer power of attacking for 2. Even Serra Angel and Sengir Vampire, popular tournament-level creatures in their heydays, have met with little success since their recent returns—a sign of different times and perspectives about just what it means to be a Magic star.

One of the few creatures to maintain its popularity throughout its run in the Magic spotlight was Erhnam Djinn. The original green grunt-pounder, this Arabian Nights superstar was immensely popular from the time of its release, immediately finding its way into competitive decks. Akira Kokoma rose to Type 1 stardom with his Red Ape-Summoning Efreet-Erhnam Djinn aggro-control deck named "Monday, May 1st"—a design that has in large part remained intact in modern-day "Oni" decks. With Erhnam making its way into the most competitive decks in a format in which Moxes and Ancestral Recall were legal, when Erhnam returned in the Chronicles set, it was no surprise that it quickly became one of the most popular creatures in the Standard environment.

Erhnam's history in Standard is a long and storied one, dating back to the first Pro Tour event. "Erhnam-Counter" decks were one of the premier archetypes of the day, combining white utility spells like Lord Tan, Swords to Plowshares, and, of course, Armageddon, with powerful, efficient green creatures headlined by Erhnam Djinn. Bertrand Lestrée piloted one of these decks to the final of that event, having gotten the design the night before from future U.S. National Champion Dennis Bentley. George Baxter and Eric Tam each also led their Erhnam decks to the Top 8. Baxter in a "Good Stuff" beatdown deck with Djinn as the only green card, and Tam in a bizarre, four-color special with everything from Zur's Weirding to Kelsan Town.

This was a pattern that would continue for quite some time. Erhnam found its way into all sorts of decks, from playing the role of the big man in monogreen creature decks to showing up in anything that could support the single green mana cost and could use a few extra factors. Erhnam-Geddon and "Erhnam and Burn Tan" met "Counter-Erhnam" and "Erhnam-Prison." Even when *Chronicles* and *Fourth Edition* rotated out of Standard, Erhnam was far from done in the tournament scene. Jon Finkel made his first of many Top 8 appearances at 1997 Pro Tour–Chicago with a creatureless Extended "moon" deck that morphed into an Erhnam Djinn–Wildfire Emissary beatdown deck after sideboarding. Jason Opsata waded through a field of "Magic" with his "Tenacity" deck the next Qualifier season, splashing Erhnams into his otherwise traditional Magic decks for large bodies to soak up the burn. Any time a deck needed beef, it was Erhnam who was called on to serve.

But that was a long time ago. It has been years since the mighty Erhnam reigned, and in its wake have come many who would claim the throne. For a time, each set had some card touted as "the new Erhnam"—much like Florentine Grace was heralded as "the new Juzam"—and time and again the namesakes failed to deliver. It wasn't until very recently that green four-drops came along that didn't pale in comparison to their famous ancestor, and these sparked a resurgence of progressive strategies. Blastoderm in particular sent green's dark Bridge Burning and both Masques Block Constructed and Standard were graced by untargetable, fading beasts for the length of an opp. The [illegible] decks bore a striking resemblance to the Erhnam and Burn Tan decks of old, and my very own "Red Zone" creature brings back memories of Erhnam-Geddon. Clearly, R&D was doing something right, creating green creatures good enough to compete with the blue boys.

Recently, there has been a veritable flood of quality green creatures. Elvish Ranger and Wild Mongrel in Call of the Herd gave players many options to choose from. Nearly all of these [illegible] were quite focused on one objective—fast beatdown. While [illegible] found in blazingly fast green-red decks with lots of [illegible] Flametongue Kavu or bounce-heavy green-blue [illegible] creatures available aren't quite as robust as Erhnam, which found its way into many different decks. At long last, Fourth Edition has brought us a creature to fill the sizable shoes left with Erhnam's passing.

Just what is this new Erhnam? Erhnam Djinn. That's right, just as the Magic

At the beginning of your upkeep, target non-Wall creature an opponent controls gains forestwalk until your next upkeep.
He provides a safe path to n
At the beginning of your upkeep, target non-Wall creature an opponent controls gains forestwalk until your next upkeep
He provides a safe path to n

creatures—there are more than enough 4 toughness creatures to go around in green. What's exciting is that it's a big creature that has only one colored mana in its cost. While this isn't especially meaningful for mana-rich decks, which could just as easily afford to play Jade Leech, it is a boon to every other deck that's looking for a big, cheap body.

Imagine the possibilities. Your Pernicious Deed deck just got another fat creature to mop things up—a creature that comes out at least a turn earlier than Spiritmonger to slow down the beats. Your Enforcer deck finally has something else to do with all that green mana and something to throw in the way of rampaging Elephants that won't get shot down right away by an angry Thelonite monk. Anyone who wants a Turtle for four can sign up the Djinn right away at the low cost of only 8.

One of the reasons Erhnam makes such a great splash card, besides being an extremely efficient creature, is that its drawback is [illegible] for many decks. Forcefields does not mean Farmstead, or Thornscape Courtyards, or Tawnos Wandstaffs, or anything of the sort. For a deck stocking the Djinn till past Judgment, a [illegible] opponent's creatures a manageable [illegible] you with quite a few Underground, uncontrollable and out of [illegible] cards. Erhnam Djinn is just what many Standard decks are looking for: a big body that can get in the way of creatures [illegible] when necessary and get out fast [illegible] when it comes to that, Erhnam Djinn is sure to see Friday night in Standard. Djinns will undoubtedly attempt to follow in Jon Finkel's footsteps by sneaking in a full set of Erhnams [illegible] their sideboards as pre-[illegible] on a fast deck.

And with the single green hit in Djinn's back pocket, the old [illegible] cards he was which decks might be added with a [illegible] he does a nice [illegible] back to the old school. While other recent efforts from the past have attempted to make a comeback, they have met with little success. Erhnam Djinn looks to be an exception. Serra Angel and Savage Vampire—despite their long-lost popularity—never had quite the same environment that welcomes the Djinn, and the era of Fundamental Karma is certainly not the time for 4/4 Lords or stronger comebacks. It is precisely the time, however, for a big old beast like Erhnam Djinn to make a comeback. Look, our world [illegible] a little bit of history, as you race [illegible] for 4.

Elephant Guide

Yet Another Amazing Card for Green!

by Mike Turian

Elephant Graveyard was created way before its time. Back in *Arabian Nights,* people saw Elephant Graveyard and thought, "What in the world can I do with this?" Besides tapping for colorless mana, Elephant Graveyard could regenerate War Mammoth and War Elephant. Compared with Library of Alexandria, Elephant Graveyard certainly wasn't very impressive.

Flash-forward to the summer of 2002, however, and Elephant Graveyard would have found a real home in *Odyssey* block. With Call of the Herd running rampant in Constructed, and Elephant Ambush pounding the ground in Limited, some Elephant Graveyards might have been pulled out of binders and thrown into Elephant decks.

One little card from the *Judgment* set adds to the Elephant madness and reinforces why it pays to ride with Trained Armodon: Elephant haters beware—Elephant Guide is here.

For just 2 , Elephant Guide is a creature enchantment that gives +3/+3 to the creature it enchants. But it gets even better. If that creature goes to the graveyard, the enchantment puts a 3/3 green Elephant token into play under the control of the enchantment's controller.

Are you kidding me? First Basking Rootwalla—and now Elephant Guide fuels green's ground force?

As if Basking Rootwalla followed up by Wild Mongrel wasn't good enough to start a game, now the two can swing for 6 on turn three with a little help from Elephant Guide.

If you haven't signed up for the **Magic** Player Rewards program yet, now would be a good time to do so. Getting a couple of extra Elephant tokens in the mail for every five tournaments you enter looks pretty good right about now. Elephants are going to decide between stomp or gore an awful lot after *Judgment* releases.

Parents will wonder if their basements have turned into zoos when they keep hearing Elephant noises float up the stairs.

The trick with the Guide will be getting it onto your creature in the first place. Getting your creature destroyed when you play your super enchantment has always been the biggest downside to creature enchantments. Elephant Guide essentially replaces itself if the enchanted creature perishes—but not if the creature dies in response to the Elephant Guide being played or if the creature is bounced.

The fact that in the pre-*Judgment* environment there are not a lot of ways to destroy creatures at instant speed makes Elephant Guide sure to see play. Prophetic Bolt, Urza's Rage, and Shock are the three best ways to instantly damage a creature, but enchanting Wild Mongrel solves that problem. And Elephant Guide certainly makes a Chainer's Edict sacrifice easier to swallow!

Terminate and bounce spells are the biggest threats to Elephant Guide. While playing Elephant Guide when your opponent is tapped out gets around Terminate, the bounce of Turbulent Dreams, Repulse, and Æther Burst answer both the enchantment and token facets of Elephant Guide.

Besides the +3/+3 bonus being great at beating your opponent silly before he or she can draw any bounce spells, one creature in particular begs for Elephant Guide—Spellbane Centaur. With the Centaur in play, any creature you control becomes immune to blue bounce. Blue decks won't appreciate the Centaur becoming a 6/5 beast that that replaces itself with a 3/3 Elephant. Or enchant any other creature when you have Spellbane Centaur in play—either way is a win-win proposition.

In Limited, green just received a huge power boost. A +3/+3 enchantment works just like an extra hasted creature, and a 3/3 hasted creature for three mana must be considered a bomb in Limited. Empyrial Armor and Heavy Ballista combined to make *Weatherlight* the white set, and green and *Judgment* will have the same relationship.

The endurance of an Elephant added onto a creature that becomes a must-kill will surely herd your opponents onto the green side. Card advantage has always been a key to success, but creature enchantments have usually hindered in that regard. But Elephant Guide breaks the rules. Elephant Guide is a creature enchantment that doesn't cost its controller a card. The drawback that has always held back creature enchantments in general has been removed.

With Elephant Guide helping to knock around your opponent, Elephants in **Magic** have never been stronger. The time to stomp and gore has finally come. It's too bad that Elephant Graveyard isn't legal in Standard because it would have finally have found a home.

Enchanted creature gets +3/+3.
When enchanted creature is put into a graveyard, put a 3/3 green Elephant creature token into play.
Nature's strength outlives the strong.

Nantuko Monastery

When Monks Fight Back

by Ben Rubin

JUDGMENT™

I can't remember a time when white was so difficult to play. In testing for Pro Tour–Osaka, which was *Odyssey* Block Constructed, we did not happen upon even one viable white deck. Even when you add *Invasion* block and *Seventh Edition*, you'll be hard-pressed to come up with a successful Standard deck sporting plains. The problem for white decks has not been anything odd or mysterious—other colors simply have better cards.

Still, we see splashes of white for cards like Meddling Mage, Mystic Enforcer, Wrath of God, and Spectral Lynx. But can't white have its own deck? With the multicolored emphasis of recent sets, a monochromatic design seems like a silly consideration, but if we splash green for Mystic Enforcer and add a little bit of blue to make threshold easy to achieve, I think we can play a base-white deck that takes advantage of rarely seen cards like Divine Sacrament and Mystic Crusader. One card that will greatly help a deck of this type comes to us in the *Judgment* set.

Nantuko Monastery is a land that adds one colorless mana to your mana pool. At threshold, however, paying ◆✱ turns the Monastery into a 4/4 green and white creature with first strike until end of turn (it still counts as a land). As long as you don't activate this ability on the opponent's turn, you've got a hefty creature that can't be Wrathed, Hobbled, or Flametongued. Additionally, the Monastery will provide mana early on, when you wouldn't be able to play a comparably powered creature, and will be immune to countermagic when you decide to use its latent strength.

As you probably know, any card gets better when your opponent is on the defensive, and a creature as large and difficult to remove as Nantuko Monastery does an exceptional job taking advantage of the aggressive posture this deck type takes. It also provides crucial diversification, meaning that Mutilates, Chainer's Edicts, and similar removal spells won't be enough if the control player doesn't have a way to deal with this uncounterable beast.

Another natural application of this card is in a control deck, where Fact or Fiction can take care of threshold, and its synergy with Wrath of God will shine. Global removal combined with land as a damage source is, of course, not a new strategy. Mishra's Factories, Treetop Villages, and Faerie Conclaves have taken advantage of their temporary statuses as creatures since, in Mishra's case, before I was playing **Magic** . Where these "man lands" were relatively easy to remove with Incinerate, Lightning Bolt, Wasteland, and Swords to Plowshares, however, Nantuko Monastery requires rarer and higher-cost answers. Vindicate, Terminate, Slay, and Volcanic Eruption come to mind, and maybe they will become more common with the debut of Nantuko Monastery. But otherwise, the top decks don't have many ways of taking care of this card (especially in combination with Divine Sacrament and Devoted Caretaker).

Given its strength in aggressive strategies, it might be surprising how much play this new land might see in familiar control designs.

Take the deck that Brian Hegstad played in the San Diego Masters. Monastery is a star in this deck, too, providing mana early, and, most importantly, providing the eventual win condition against decks that can deal with Mystic Enforcer. It's possible that its presence alone will be enough to revitalize this strategy that Chainer's Edict had left crippled.

The deck ideas I have mentioned are, as you often hear, "only the beginning" of the ways to use Nantuko Monastery. The card is not, however, without its share of difficulties. Nantuko Monastery is a demanding card, requiring two colors of mana—and threshold—in order to be effective. So while I hope I have made clear how potentially powerful this card is, it will probably not be a format staple like Repulse, Call of the Herd, or Fact or Fiction. Instead, its contributions will be felt in magnitude. The magnitude I speak of will be quite different than, say, a utility card like Firebolt. Although Firebolt is quite strong, all it does is replace a card like Shock or Volcanic Hammer and provide a bit of added efficiency. Nantuko Monastery adds a new dimension to the arsenal of the deck it joins. Many control decks will require new types of removal to combat this potentially 4/4 first striker, meaning that they will not be as prepared to deal with the other threats in the decks from which it may emerge. Aggressive decks will also have to deal with a new obstacle that is much harder to combat than the usual white or green creature. Expect a nearly forgotten flavor of attacker coming your way in *Judgment* .

◆ Add one colorless mana to your mana pool.
Threshold ◆✱: Nantuko Monastery becomes a 4/4 green and white creature with first strike until end of turn. It's still a land. (Play this ability only if seven or more cards are in your graveyard.)

Standard Decks to Beat

Now with Torment!

by Ben Rubin

In the new Standard, which is both rocking with the new Torment *additions and reeling with the restrictive effects of those cards, it isn't always easy to know which decks to play—or even which decks to be prepared to beat. This article should better equip you not only to answer both questions, but also to improve upon the other ideas shared herein.*

— The Top Contenders —

We'll start with the two most solid decks from pre-*Torment* Standard—decks that need a little revitalization in response to the new cards, but that are still capable of claiming a place among the elite. Let's first address green-red.

There are many opinions on how this deck should be built. This build is aimed at being particularly effective in the war of attrition that seems to have escalated in the face of efficient *Torment* removal like Mutilate, Chainer's Edict, Fiery Temper, and Violent Eruption. Given variations in the metagame (or new ideas in how this deck should be built), however, there could be more aggressive approaches involving Reckless Charge, Sonic Seizure, or similar cards.

The significance of this deck is its early creature assault force. Each deck discussed in this article, therefore, must be able to hold off this early beatdown. So we'll keep this deck in mind as we construct the other decks. While you might not constantly face green-red as you see it here, you will play against lots of Call of the Herds and Grim Lavamancers—so preparing for this deck will cover a lot of bases. A deck worth a similar amount of consideration is Psychatog.

This Psychatog deck is an extremely aggressive version that can win the long game or gain a crushing advantage as early as turn four. Many versions will not contain any discard, opting instead for deck manipulation and additional countermagic. As such, consider this particular decklist to be an adventurous version of an established archetype, rather than a tried-and-true version to test against. If you're looking for a test deck, the Internet is an unbeatable resource.

I suppose it would be appropriate to defend the fairly drastic

Green-Red Beatdown
Standard - March 2002

2	Basking Rootwalla
4	Flametongue Kavu
4	Grim Lavamancer
4	Llanowar Elves
4	Raging Kavu
4	Wild Mongrel
4	Beast Attack
4	Call of the Herd
2	Skizzik
2	Urza's Rage
2	Volcanic Eruption
9	Forest
4	Karplusan Forest
4	Mossfire Valley
7	Mountain

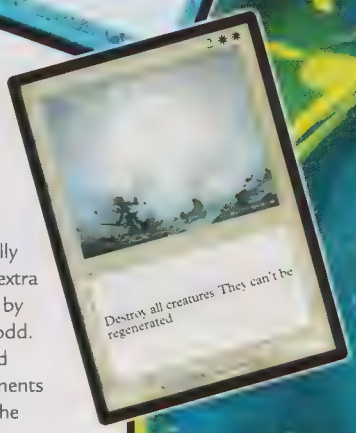
Psychatog
Standard - March 2002

4	Mesmeric Fiend
4	Psychatog
4	Shadowmage Infiltrator
4	Chainer's Edict
4	Counterspell
4	Duress
4	Fact or Fiction
4	Repulse
3	Undermine
1	Upheaval
11	Island
9	Swamp
4	Underground River

Shadowmage Infiltrator can't be blocked except by artifact creatures and/or black creatures.
Whenever Shadowmage Infiltrator deals combat damage to a player, you may draw a card.
Chainer's Edict
Sorcery
Target player sacrifices a creature.
Flashback 5
(You may play this card from your graveyard for its flashback cost. Then remove it from the game.)
The pits have their own form of mercy.
Remove two cards in your graveyard from the game: Grim Lavamancer deals 2 damage to target creature or player.
"Fools dig for water, corpses, or gold. The earth's real treasure is far deeper."
When Flametongue Kavu comes into play, it deals 4 damage to target creature.
"For dim-witted, thick-skulled genetic mutants, they have pretty good aim."
—Sivay

changes I have made from, say, Ryan Fuller's Masters Series Psychatog deck. I have always felt that control decks are benefited by the option of being aggressive. In the old days, this was usually embodied by Ophidian and sometimes even Tradewind Rider or Steel Golem. Shadowmage Infiltrator is a *lot* better than those ancient tools. The fact that the ways to remove Infiltrator have improved is not reason enough to keep Psychatog decks from having that aggressive option. There are ways to fight back, with countermagic and discard being the choices here. Additionally, the backbone of this deck, Psychatog, is pretty feeble without accompanying troops. It is sad to think that one Chainer's Edict can rob you of what is otherwise a sturdy defender and eventually overwhelming attacker. In this light, the extra creatures to sacrifice, while not half-bad by themselves, shouldn't seem particularly odd.

This versatility between aggression and reaction will mean that when your opponents don't come out swinging, you can take the initiative and keep them on their heels. Additionally, in a war between control decks, you will not be restricted to playing lands as your only way to push for an advantage. Instead, you can try to strip your opponent's hand of answers and protect your Infiltrator, which, if not dealt with immediately, should seal the game for you.



— Mystic Enforcer —

Another deck that I liked in Standard before the introduction of *Torment* was the one that took Brian Hegstad to the Top 4 of the San Diego Masters. A Brian Kibler version is listed here.

Enforcer's aims are pretty intuitive and have been made quite easy to understand by the writing of its creator. Those of us who watched this deck versus Psychatog may remember that it actually had a decent game. It might even have remained a top-tier deck, relatively unchanged, if it had not been for the advent of *that card*—Chainer's Edict. Where Mystic Enforcer was once a nearly invincible, easily played beast, the near-invincible part disappears when it's a one-creature show. This compromises the basic premise of the deck unless some major changes are made. The result of such changes, in accordance with my interpretation of the format and in consideration of the decks I have mentioned, is something a little different. Let's call it "Aggro-Mystic" for now.

Enforcer
Standard - March 2002

4	Mystic Enforcer
3	Absorb
4	Counterspell
3	Disrupt
4	Fact or Fiction
3	Memory Lapse
3	Opt
4	Peek
2	Predict
4	Repulse
3	Wrath of God
4	Adarkar Wastes
3	Brushland
4	Coastal Tower
7	Island
2	Sungrass Prairie
3	Yavimaya Coast

sideboard

2	Aura Mutation
4	Call of the Herd
4	Medd ing Mage
2	Questing Phelddagrif
3	Wild Mongrel

Aggro-Mystic
Standard - March 2002

4	Llanowar Knight
4	Meddling Mage
4	Mystic Enforcer
2	Wild Mongrel
4	Call of the Herd
4	Counterspell
4	Fact or Fiction
2	Memory Lapse
4	Peek
4	Repulse
4	Adarkar Wastes
2	Brushland
3	Coastal Tower
3	Forest
5	Island
3	Sungrass Prairie
4	Yavimaya Coast

You might notice in Aggro-Mystic that I again enlisted new troops to combat Chainer's Edict. With this thematic addition has come the familiar expansion in flexibility as far as when this deck is ready to stop defending and start attacking. In this case, attacking should be the primary goal from the beginning because, unfortunately, Wrath of God had to go when I added all of those nice creatures. With it, as well as most of the deck's countermagic, went this deck's primary late-game strengths. In their places we have Elephant tokens that can flashback and creatures that can play useful defense if circumstances demand it. But this deck is not built to sit idly by until it is safe to skirmish. For example, against a deck like Kibler's "Aggro-Black," you will be in for an increasingly difficult fight, as Nantuko Shades grow in potential power and Chainer's Edicts become more realistic to flashback. While Aggro-Mystic is still geared toward winning with broken creatures, this version uses a lot more of them and shouldn't wait to initiate the fight.

— Monoblack —

For those of you unfamiliar with Kibler's new deck, it seems to be the most promising construction, since the addition of *Torment*, in Standard. At face value it's a deck built to break opposing offenses with cheap card advantage creatures, and removal. However, most of its defensive cards also work well against decks that don't rely on quick creatures. With the addition of Mesmeric Fiend, Duress, Ichorid, and Braids, you have a deck that looks tailor made to beat control decks. Additionally, the discard and Braids are fine against aggressive decks, meaning you won't have to worry too much about drawing the wrong cards against a particular deck. In sum, the excitement (perhaps I speak of potential excitement) of this deck is its versatility and efficiency.

For all of these reasons, it should not be considered a metagamed deck or something you can easily beat just by virtue of having a well-tuned deck. In this way, it is reminiscent of Psychatog and Fires's former reigns as Standard kings. You will probably have to gear your deck specifically toward beating it in order to stand a good chance. So, while it is a bit early to tell if the new king will be black-red (or if we ought to even speak of royalty yet), it will be worthwhile to think about how to effectively combat this strategy.

Traditional approaches, as I suggested earlier, have failed to phase this deck. Discard, Ichorids, creatures that replace themselves economically (Ravenous Rats, Phyrexian Ragers, Flametongue Kavus), and sideboarded Arena's make creature control and countermagic insufficient to meet this deck's offense. Additionally, the traditional defenses centered around Psychatog or Mystic Enforcer are much less likely to pay off, mostly because of Chainer's Edict. On the other hand, it seems nearly impossible that the green and red monsters we are so used to seeing will be able to survive Flametongue Kavu, Shambling Swarm, Chainer's Edict, and sideboarded Slays.

Aggro-Black
Standard - March 2002

4	Braids, Cabal Minion
4	Flametongue Kavu
2	Ichorid
4	Mesmeric Fiend
4	Nantuko Shade
4	Phyrexian Rager
4	Ravenous Rats
2	Shambling Swarm
4	Chainer's Edict
4	Duress
4	Sulfurous Springs
16	Swamp
4	Tainted Peak

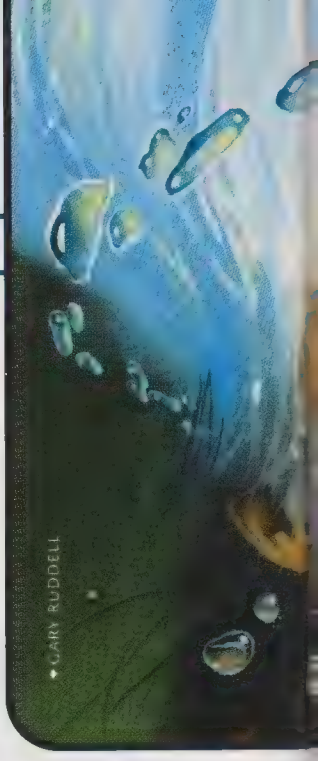
sideboard

1	Ichorid
2	Mortivore
2	Persecute
4	Phyrexian Arena
2	Shambling Swarm
4	Slay

— Metagaming —

So, how are we supposed to beat this deck? Instead of taking the traditional approach of banging my head against the wall that appears to be this deck's underbelly, I have humbled myself a little bit. Usually, I build decks to maximize efficiency, versatility, and consistency without worrying about specific matchups until I am choosing the last, say, eight cards of the deck. This time, I have swapped my priorities. Instead of worrying primarily about the deck being "good," and worrying secondarily about beating other decks (say, aggro-black), I brought together the best group of black and red haters I could find. While I think that this deck has game against most of the decks in the format, I have made almost certain that it will beat

Braids, Cabal Minion
Creature — Minion Legend
"At the beginning of each player's upkeep, that player sacrifices an artifact, creature, or land.
"Home is where you can find a decent graveyard and strangers can disappear without awkward questions."
Illus. Eric Peterson
Mesmeric Fiend
Creature — Nightmare Horror
When Mesmeric Fiend comes into play, target opponent reveals his or her hand and you choose a nonland card from it. Remove that card from the game.
When Mesmeric Fiend leaves play, return the removed card to its owner's hand
Illus. Dana Knutson
Nantuko Shade
Creature — Insect Shade
Nantuko Shade gets +1/+1 until end of turn.
"If the Nantuko only knew what awaits them beyond death, they would abandon all they hold dear."
—Cabal Patriarch
Illus. Brian Snoddy
Duress
Sorcery
Target opponent reveals his or her hand. Choose a noncreature, nonland card from it. That player discards that card.
"Change your mind, or I'll change it for you."
Illus. Eric Peterson



White Meanie

Standard · March 2002

4	Devoted Caretaker
4	Divine Sacrament
4	Galina's Knight
4	Llanowar Knight
4	Meddling Mage
4	Mystic Crusader
4	Mystic Enforcer
4	Breakthrough
3	Fact or Fiction
4	Adarkar Wastes
4	Brushland
3	Island
5	Plains
2	Skycloud Expanse
3	Sungrass Prairie
4	Yavimaya Coast

aggro-black.

I call it "White Meanie."

This deck is quite liberal when it comes to taking damage from lands. If you expect to face a lot of green-red, or similarly aggressive decks, you should yank the Llanowar Knights and make a smaller commitment to green mana production. (You could even take out the Enforcers and play Voice of Alls and Spectral Lynxes.) You might also find yourself losing to Shadowmage Infiltrators, a problem that can be solved by adding Wild Mongrels. (Of course, doing 20 damage to your opponent is a good enough solution most of the time.)

With creatures protected from much of the opposition, and much faster and more efficient than most of the competition, this deck has a good game against most aggressive decks. Of course, taking damage from your lands and weakness to individual cards like Call of the Herd, Beast Attack, and Grim Lavamancer will mean that you have to fight aggressively. You should be pleasantly surprised, however, at how quick and devastating this deck can be.

Against decks that take a more reactive approach, you need to play a bit more carefully. For example, Wrath of God can be quite embarrassing if you aren't prepared for it. Instead of always thinking about the attack, practice and get a feel for which spells to play first against decks heavy on countermagic, when to dive head first into a Psychatog, when to establish threshold, and when to put more creatures into play. Such are the benefits of playing over theorizing.

Of course, this deck doesn't have the flexibility that some of the previously mentioned decks do because reactive strength has been placed in the sideboard. There simply is no room for cards like Memory Lapse, Syncopate, Hobble, Repentance (big, white creatures can be a serious obstacle), and Aura Mutation in the main deck if you want to keep the consistent aggressive potential of this deck intact. Instead, you'll have to swap out Fact or Fictions and/or creatures that are not well suited for the matchup in order to bring in the specific countermeasures you'll need.

There are, of course, other interesting decks in Standard, such as Squirrel Nest–Opposition, "Balancing Tings," and "Wild Plagiarization." Each of these seems peculiar enough, however, that it is not worth preparing for them specifically, whereas the decks I described should give you a good sense of which decks you need to be ready to beat. I hope you are able to apply some of the ideas in this article so that you'll be better prepared to build and play in the new Standard.

Try out Ben's decks at Grand Prix–Milwaukee, the first Standard Grand Prix. Grand Prix–Milwaukee takes place on May 11-12, 2002. Check wizards.com/grandprix for details.

These are ready to help you gain a time advantage by sacrificing themselves to Chainer's Edict while the real gangsters keep coming.
*, Φ: Target permanent you control gains protection from instant spells and from sorcery spells until end of turn.
Her eyes blaze with the strength of twenty shields. Every glance is a salvation.
1/2
Might as well have protection from the primary color of the deck we are trying to beat. While it's only a 2/2 versus most other decks, protection from black makes it pretty annoying for Kibler's minotaurs.
Protection from black
Her armor and steed were borrowed, but her courage was hers alone.
2/2
"Pikula" will wonder why I surrounded him with such comparatively janky counterparts.
As Meddling Mage comes into play, name a nonland card.
The named card can't be played.
Meddling mages chant so loudly that no one can get a spell in edgewise.
2/2
A creature that wouldn't be good enough if it was not for
Protection from red
"Are they on our side?" asked Sisay
"If they kill Phyrexians they are," replied Gerrard.
2/2
This is probably the best card in the deck, for obvious reasons.
White creatures get +1/+1.
Threshold — White creatures get an additional +1/+1. (You have threshold as long as seven or more cards are in your graveyard.)
Their whispered prayers rally the nomads better than any war cry could.
With protection from red and black and even potentially good against white, blue, and green decks once you reach threshold, the Crusader is well suited to our mission.
Protection from black and from red
Threshold — Mystic Crusader gets +1/+1 and has flying. (You have threshold as long as seven or more cards are in your graveyard.)
2/1
I suggest keeping it in hand until it's safe from Fiametongue Kavu. After that, let it get to work.
Protection from black
Threshold — Mystic Enforcer gets +3 +3 and has flying. (You have threshold as long as seven or more cards are in your graveyard.)
3/3
Don't be afraid to play this card for one or zero. If getting to threshold wins you the game, then win the game!
Draw four cards, then choose X cards in your hand and discard the rest from it.
The ideas came flooding in so fast that they couldn't all be contained.
In case you don't draw Breakthrough, it doesn't hurt to have another way to get to threshold. Of course, this card is no slouch if the game slows down a bit and you need to find more creatures.
Reveal the top five cards of your library. An opponent separates those cards into two face-up piles. Put one pile into your hand and the other into your graveyard.
Φ: Add one colorless mana to your mana pool.
Φ: Add ♠ or ♦ to your mana pool. Yavimaya Coast deals 1 damage to you.

Odyssey-Torment Draft Analysis

Pro Tour Champ Shares His Strategy

by Mike Turian

They sit on the table staring at you—two *Odyssey* packs and a *Torment* pack, contents unknown. Cephalid Looter or Wild Mongrel? Faceless Butcher or Grotesque Hybrid? The possibilities are endless and unless you have a huge chart in your brain with every possible predetermined permutation, tough decisions will need to be made when that pack gets opened.

Make the right decisions—over and over again—and your deck will be unstoppable. Make one wrong decision, and next thing you know your deck is headed into the gutter. Especially in a format short on good commons, like *Odyssey-Torment* Booster Draft, every correctly picked card makes for less chaff in your deck.

The move away from five-color *Invasion* block drafting has been slower than anticipated. While five colors should almost never be played in *Odyssey-Torment,* booster drafts often see players splashing a third, or even fourth, color.

Noah Boeken, whose deck had Bog Wreckage and a mountain to support a lone Pardic Collaborator, recently won Grand Prix–Barcelona. Boeken also had two Cephalid Looters and a few other discard effects to help get rid of the Collaborator if he couldn't play it. Franck Canu took color splashing to the extreme in Barcelona, playing two mountains and a Shadowblood Egg to support a Violent Eruption. Good luck. At the same time, only three players in the Barcelona Top 8 played two colors, and at Grand Prix–Antwerp, only half of the Top 8 played two colors. Before *Invasion* block, conventional wisdom held that you should never play more than two colors. But all of a sudden, three colors is everywhere.

People aren't afraid of getting color hosed anymore.

Invasion taught **Magic** players how to balance their mana. Playing cards such as Harrow, triple lands, Dream Thrush, and Reef Shaman showed us how easy it is to splash a Jilt, a Battlemage, or an Æther Mutation. When drafting *Invasion* block, playing more than two colors was a necessity that made **Magic** players consider their mana more carefully than the quick "nine of one land, eight of the other" method that had for so long been popular.

The addition of the "sacrifice for any color" *Odyssey* lands makes splashing a color much easier. Also, card recyclers like Cephalid Broker, Compulsion, and Cephalid Looter mean that the previously dead card in your hand can now be replaced by something more useful. Green, as always, offers us ways to fix our mana, with Diligent Farmhand, Rites of Spring, Deep Reconnaissance, and Far Wanderings as a few examples.

Odyssey has many cards that allow a player to discard for an effect. The uncommon cycle that includes Hypochondria and Narcissism gives tremendous benefits for discarding cards from your hand, as does everyone's favorite creature, Wild Mongrel. Even cards with more mediocre discard effects, such as Fledgling Imp and Crashing Centaur, turn an unplayable card into a small bonus and a card in your graveyard to help enable threshold.

The *Torment* set introduced some *Apocalypse*-style, enemy-color effects with the Possessed creatures, the two Collaborators, and the Tainted lands. Boeken playing a Pardic Collaborator in a primarily blue-black deck is a perfect example of the way this effect pushes decks into more than two colors. While black has traditionally lacked mana fixing, the Tainted lands make splashing a nonblack card in a mainly black deck much easier.

But don't let all of this talk trick you into playing three colors consistently. While three colors can be a valuable weapon in your draft arsenal, two colors provide a more consistent punch. Red-black decks found a home in the *Torment* set. In pre-*Torment* draft, red-black decks had the least synergy. The targeted removal and burn combination, while normally deadly, lacked a solid creature base to make red-black decks the threat that they usually are. While only the Innocent Blood–Gravedigger–Anarchist archetype succeeded in *Odyssey,* the addition of *Torment* gave red-black decks the creatures they lacked in *Odyssey.* Barbarian Outcast and Pardic Collaborator are great for red-black because they are both great creatures that are virtually worthless in red decks without black. Faceless Butcher, Mesmeric Fiend, Petravark, and Soul Scourge all complement red-black decks very well. The red burn and black removal becomes strong, and combined with one less pack of Pilgrims, red-black has all gears churning in *Odyssey-Torment* Booster Draft.

Blue-black was arguable the best color combination in pre-*Torment* Booster Draft. Pro Tour–San Diego tables were often divided among blue-white, green-red, and blue-black decks. Because *Torment* was the black set, green and white got handicapped. This left only blue-black unscathed, and, in fact, blue-black got the biggest boost from *Torment.* Along with Tainted Isle, which provides solid mana fixing for the many double blue–costed cards, blue's solid commons complement the overwhelming amount of black in the *Torment* set. Deep Analysis gives blue some common four-for-one card

Faceless Butcher
Creature — Nightmare Horror
When Faceless Butcher comes into play, remove target creature other than Faceless Butcher from the game.
When Faceless Butcher leaves play, return the removed card to play under its owner's control.
Fiery Temper deals 3 damage to target creature or player.
Madness (You may play this card for its madness cost at the time you discard it from your hand.)

Cephalid Looter is a top pick for blue.

Grappling Fatigue
Target creature gets -2/-2 until end of turn
Flashback 1 Pay 3 life. You can play this card from your graveyard as an instant by paying its flashback cost. Then remove it from the game.

Enchantment
Discard a card from your hand: Target creature gets +2 +2 until end of turn
Sacrifice Narcissism: Target creature gets +2 +2 until end of turn.

Ghastly Demise
Instant
Destroy target nonblack creature if its toughness is less than or equal to the number of cards in your graveyard.
"Anyone can snap my fingers and yank a soul. I prefer to still creatures."
—Braids, fen cabal summoner

Nightmares the bane of the white-green deck.

advantage, and Skywing Aven and Hydromorph Gull help maintain a strong blue flying force.

Squirrel Nest used to spell doom for blue-black, but Rancid Earth and Churning Eddy are solid answers to the Nest problem. Another reason that blue, black, and red are more desirable now is the Nightmare creatures. They are very strong, from the ridiculous Laquatus's Champion, Faceless Butcher, and Mesmeric Fiend to the strong Petravark and Soul Scourge. The other colors' abilities to mitigate these creatures will swing the game in one direction or the other.

Obviously, the Nightmare creatures must be dealt with, and red, black, and blue are the colors best able to do it. Either bouncing or destroying your opponent's Nightmare in a timely fashion will negate the creature type's powerful ability. With the exception of Kirtar's Wrath, however, white and green have no way to stop them unless the opponent sends them into combat, making two-for-one block set up. Narcissism adds an excellent card to green-red, but it mostly sits on the table taunting your opponent.

Green-red decks are still good enough to play, but forcing the color combination in draft has become less wise. The key to winning with green-red lies in drafting cheap, mana-efficient *Odyssey* creatures higher than before, then filling in the deck with the uncommons and rares that *Torment* supplies. This is another reason why three-color drafting has gained popularity. When green or red becomes overdrafted, green-red players are often forced to add a third color to make up for the lack of quality *Torment* commons.

Remember when the joke about islands being banned was popular? *Judgment* had better be the white set—otherwise, tournament organizers shouldn't even bother bringing plains to Limited events. Looking at the quality of white now harkens back to the days of *Tempest* when green was the ugly stepchild.

To an extent, looking at cards for their value in Limited often shows their value in Constructed and vice versa. Pro Tour–Osaka was a Constructed *Odyssey* Block event with 277 competitors. With approximately 6,600 lands being played, only 43 were plains. That extreme shows white's weakness in *Odyssey* block, and this weakness also extends to Limited. One of the best tournament organizers in the world, Mike Guptil, staged a Pro Tour Qualifier in which his staff ran out of swamps for the main event; luckily, there were plenty of extra plains to be used as proxies.

White's weakness illustrates an excellent point about Booster Draft: A draft will self-correct any color imbalances. When one color dominates, more people will draft it. This simple mechanism allows white to be played in *Odyssey-Torment* draft.

Blue-white brings the best out of white. Defense and fliers are white's strong suit in *Odyssey-Torment* Limited. Teroh's Faithful, Militant Monk, and Hypochondria are the *Torment* set's best additions to white. With *Torment,* green-white suffers from a lack of quality commons, but what makes white even worse is its lack of good uncommons. While all five white uncommons are playable, only Hypochondria qualifies as a high pick. White's life gain and defense allow blue's card advantage and powerful fliers to take over games. White-red has become almost entirely defunct because of the lack of mana-efficient creatures in *Torment,* and green-white never had a place in *Odyssey* to begin with.

As far as Limited rules go, there aren't any. "Play land, play spells, play often" would be the best advice for becoming better at Booster Draft. Don't worry about the number of creatures in your deck; instead, build the best deck possible. Remember that you are part of a draft ecosystem. The picks you make affect everyone else at the table, so take advantage of this and make the table respond to you.

Green-red has suffered at the hands of *Torment.* The green-red deck used quick creatures like Mad Dog and Wild Mongrel to apply pressure in the early game; fat, slow creatures like Rabid Elephant and Springing Tiger for the midgame; and utility creatures like Chainflinger and Nantuko Disciple to succeed in long games. Key spells like Reckless Charge and Demoralize brought control players to their knees, allowing green-red to bowl them over. The *Torment* set, however, offers green-red little in the way of speed and even less in power.

Besides green getting fewer common cards than every color other besides white, it also has a lack of good cards. Green's one common star is Basking Rootwalla, but after that green goes downhill. With Krosan Constrictor, Nantuko Calmer, and Acorn Harvest replacing Springing Tiger, Rabid Elephant, and Nantuko Disciple, green-red became not only slower but also less powerful. Besides Basking Rootwalla, only two green commons cost less than three mana. And Far Wanderings and Krosan Restorer are pretty weak.

Red suffered a similar fate in regard to the green-red archetype. Red did receive Sonic Seizure, Fiery Temper, and Crackling Club for a versatile selection of removal. But Longhorn Firebeast and Pardic Lancer are poor follow-ups to Mad Dog, Ember Beast, Barbarian Lunatic, and Pardic Firecat.

To further compound green-red's problems, *Torment* provided no new instant-speed enhancement spells. Temporary Insanity would be the closest thing to filling this role, but in a green-red deck it would be used primarily to add to an attack, not to get a

PT–Osaka Top 8 Decks

In-Depth Analysis of Odyssey Block

by Zvi Mowshowitz

The three blue-green decks that made it into the Top 8 of Pro Tour–Osaka were all pretty different from each other. There was a small group of core cards, but outside of those, each deck went its own way. Aside from the lands, the common cards were four Basking Rootwallas, four Wild Mongrels, three Werebears, and three Circular Logics. Those cards comprised fewer than one-half of their nonland cards. We can draw the conclusion, then, that each deck is really two decks, not just one. Ken Ho's deck, however, is clearly the one that stands out from the other two, with the key card being Breakthrough.

Ken Ho
- Blue-Green -

4	Aquamoeba
4	Arrogant Wurm
4	Basking Rootwalla
3	Werebear
4	Wild Mongrel
4	Circular Logic
4	Roar of the Wurm
3	Squirrel Nest
4	Standstill
3	Upheaval
13	Forest
9	Island
1	Tarnished Citadel

sideboard

4	Aura Graft
3	Moment's Peace
3	Nantuko Blightcutter
2	Persuasion
3	Still Life

Breakthrough is threshold on a stick, getting you four cards deeper into your deck regardless of how much mana is paid. It also allows you to discard anything you want, whether for madness, flashback, or threshold. Without Breakthrough, it would have taken a significant amount of time for the blue-green decks to get to threshold, unlike some other decks in Extended and Standard. Those formats often have more high-power decks that play with more ways to put cards into the graveyard. In Block Constructed, threshold must be earned, and Breakthrough is one of the best ways to do it.

With Breakthrough, the value of the other cards in the deck changes radically. Nimble Mongoose goes from a horrible creature that generally has utility only with Upheaval to one that gets useful very quickly. Werebear gets a similar boost, although it is good enough to play with Upheaval alone. Deep Analysis also gets a promotion, going from a clunky card drawer to a quick way to get two more free cards. Breakthrough also strengthens Careful Study because it allows for more ways to discard bad cards or to reclaim card disadvantage, and it makes Æther Burst more likely to start returning multiple creatures. It's also another way to get Basking Rootwalla into play for free and to trigger other madness cards.

Christophe Haim's deck was about coming out fast for almost no mana. He had only twenty lands, and he had no card for which he intended to pay more than three mana (other than Breakthrough). With threshold, his cheap creatures averaged about 3/3. Careful Study and Breakthrough enabled threshold together with Deep Analysis and Standstill. The only tricks the deck had were Æther Burst and Centaur Garden, which is affordable because the deck is so aggressive.

Christophe Haim
- Blue-Green -

2	Aquamoeba
3	Arrogant Wurm
4	Basking Rootwalla
4	Nimble Mongoose
4	Werebear
4	Wild Mongrel
4	Æther Burst
4	Breakthrough
3	Careful Study
3	Circular Logic
3	Deep Analysis
2	Standstill
2	Centaur Garden
9	Forest
9	Island

sideboard

3	Anurid Scavenger
2	Aura Graft
1	Circular Logic
2	Divert
2	Moment's Peace
3	Spellbane Centaur
2	Standstill

Sylvain Lauriol took the mana curve up a few notches. The cheaper Deep Analysis was upgraded to the vastly more powerful Roar of the Wurm. He had one copy of Upheaval, the biggest weapon this format has to offer. He ditched the three Nimble Mongooses in favor of Thought Eaters and Seton's Scout. His oddest card was Stupefying Touch, which made Wild Mongrel and Nantuko Shade, two of the game's best two drops, into a pair of dorks. To pay for all of

Draw four cards, then choose X cards in your hand and discard the rest from it.
The ideas came flooding in so fast that they couldn't all be contained
Discard a card from your hand: Wild Mongrel gets +1/+1 and becomes the color of your choice until end of turn.
It teaches you to play dead.

this, he had two more lands than Haim.

At the high end of the mana curve was Ken Ho, who won the event on the back of the Top 8's strangest card, Tarnished Citadel. Some have noted that Ho could not have won games 4 and 5 if he hadn't been able to use the Citadel for green in one game and blue in the other. There is no other land in the format that can do that, and there's no question that blue-green's mana is problematic. The fact that the Citadel is downright bad is hard to dispute, but sometimes bad cards are necessary because there is nothing else that fits the bill. But Yavimaya Coast sure would have been nice.

Sylvain Lauriol

- Blue-Green -

4	Basking Rootwalla
1	Nimble Mongoose
2	Seton's Scout
2	Spellbane Centaur
2	Thought Eater
4	Werebear
4	Wild Mongrel
4	Breakthrough
4	Careful Study
3	Circular Logic
1	Compulsion
4	Roar of the Wurm
2	Stupefying Touch
1	Upheval
2	Centaur Garden
9	Forest
11	Island

sideboard

2	Aboshan, Cephalid Emperor
1	Aura Graft
2	Llawan, Cephalid Empress
2	Moment's Peace
1	Spellbane Centaur
3	Standstill
2	Still Life
1	Stupefying Touch
1	Upheaval

Ho played three copies of Upheaval and three copies of Squirrel Nest. Considering how much mana is required to use a Nest properly, it becomes clear how much more expensive this version of the blue-green deck was. Together with four Roar of the Wurms, he played every candidate card for the deck that costs four or more mana to use. On top of that, he was missing Careful Study. That makes sense on one hand because he'll never have extra lands to discard. Then again, Careful Study is good at getting the deck to its first few lands. Compared to the other blue-green decks, Ho's version seemed seriously low on mana despite its extra land. Not only were its spells more expensive, but it also had no way of drawing extra cards (except for Standstill).

Standstill was the other interesting thing about Ho's deck. He had four copies of Aquamoeba to ensure that he could get off to a reasonable second turn, but on turn one all he had was Basking Rootwalla—and he didn't have other ways to ensure that he could keep dropping lands while he waited. What he did instead was to pack tools that punished his opponents for letting the game drag on without incident. Squirrel Nest can turn the entire board around under a Standstill, forcing the opponent to break the stall first. Upheaval can win the entire game after the Standstill and is one of the best ways to break a game open.

On top of that, Standstill was amazing against blue-green's top opponent in Osaka: monoblack. Because black has relatively few permanents, it would be a rare game where it could stop blue-green from getting board advantage long enough to drop a Standstill. Packed full of sorcery-speed removal, there's no way to stop the attack without breaking the Standstill, and every turn brings the game closer to Upheaval. In such matchups, Standstill is virtually a two-mana Ancestral Recall. This metagaming was probably the key to Ho's victory.

The monoblack decks had more cards in common with each other than the blue-green decks did. With blue-green, there were several ways to approach deckbuilding. With monoblack, however, there was a specific set of cards the deck used, with few slots left over. There was no question the deck would run a full complement of Chainer's Edicts, Nantuko Shades, Mutilates, and Mind Sludges, as well as three or four copies of Innocent Blood. It needed some number of Shambling Swarms, anywhere from two to four. It normally ran four Diabolic Tutors

Basking Rootwalla gets +2/+2 until end of turn. Play this ability only once each turn.
Madness 0 (You may play this card for its madness cost at the same you discard it from your hand.)
Discard a card from your hand: Switch Aquamoeba's power and toughness until end of turn.
Some tides need no moon.
Threshold — Werebear gets +3/+3. (You have threshold as long as seven or more cards are in your graveyard.)
He exercises his right to bear arms.

✦HEATHER HUDSON

to get the cards it needed, although Ruel cut the count down to just two. Between the main deck and the sideboard, there had to be four copies of Rancid Earth to take out Squirrel Nest and to battle for mana advantage in the mirror match. Finally, there was always at least one copy each of Skeletal Scrying and Haunting Echoes.

The main decks of Jens Thoren and Rob Dougherty were practically identical. Rob had sixty-one cards in his deck and ran two extra lands (where Thoren had just an Innocent Blood), and he substituted two Stalking Bloodsuckers for Shambling Swarms to fly over unsuspecting opponents. Otherwise, the main decks were identical. Team Your Move Games (YMG) found the Bloodstalkers late in testing, and felt they were a huge help against green. While creatures like Nantuko Shade or even Laquatus's Champion were stuck on the ground, a Bloodsucker can easily fly over for the win in as little as two turns. The other big creature of choice was almost always Laquatus's Champion. Whether the Champion is better or worse, it's the flashier creature. And all things being equal (which in Block Constructed they never are), it is also the more powerful. Most people didn't even think to try the Bloodsucker.

When Dougherty and Thoren sideboarded, however, things diverged in a hurry. The most important black sideboard card was Braids, Cabal Minion. After the tournament, Dougherty went so far as to say that if he had it to do over again, he would put one Braids into the main deck to find with Diabolic Tutor. What made Braids so powerful is that it was devastating in the mirror match. The mirror is all about mana, with both sides full of amazingly powerful spells to play. The plan after sideboarding is to use Mesmeric Fiend, another sideboard card, together with Braids and Rancid Earth. Both players try to take out their opponent's mana while protecting their own. Most of the successful versions of the monoblack deck used that plan. Thoren didn't because he never discovered the value of Braids while playtesting, and he went through the tournament wishing he had.

The rest of Dougherty's sideboard covered his bases. Against decks with token creatures or that played creatures and lacked Upheaval, Faceless Butcher is a great creature. It can be dangerous, but it's normally worth it. The problem was that it failed to help solve the main problem of the deck: so many expensive spells. Faceless Butcher costs four mana because it combines two effects in one card. Skeletal Scrying was there for its utility in the mirror and when extra cards were needed, and Ghastly Demise provided both additional removal and a solution for threats, such as Still Life, that couldn't be reached by sorceries.

In addition to tweaking some numbers to fill some space, Thoren had two cards to replace the "tech" he didn't find. Last Rites stripped opponents' hands of anything worthwhile for just three mana, but it had to be used sparingly because, even at its best, it is card disadvantage without flashback or madness. His other unique addition was two additional copies of Haunting Echoes, which the other two monoblack decks had only one of. The key problem with using so many Echoes is that in a battle between Echoes, it doesn't always help to have more of them. If a deck with three Echoes gets the first one off and an opposing deck with only one then plays its own, it will take out all three Echoes in the opponent's deck. In addition, because of Braids, the mirror isn't about Echoes after sideboarding.

Olivier Ruel
- Monoblack -

4	Laquatus's Champion
4	Nantuko Shade
2	Shambling Swarm
4	Chainer's Edict
2	Diabolic Tutor
1	Haunting Echoes
4	Innocent Blood
4	Mind Sludge
1	Morbid Hunger
3	Mutilate
1	Rancid Earth
3	Skeletal Scrying
4	Cabal Coffers
23	Swamp

sideboard

4	Braids, Cabal Minion
3	Mesmeric Fiend
1	Morbid Hunger
1	Mutilate
3	Rancid Earth
2	Shambling Swarm
1	Skeletal Scrying

There are other matchups, however, in which Echoes is a powerful weapon.

Olivier Ruel had the third monoblack deck. His had four main-deck copies of Laquatus's Champion, three Skeletal Scryings, and a Morbid Hunger. Most people wondered how all of that could possibly fit into the deck. Ruel did it by cutting some sacred cows. He had only one copy of Rancid Earth in the main deck, moving the other three to the sideboard.

Robert Dougherty
- Monoblack -

4	Nantuko Shade
2	Shambling Swarm
2	Stalking Bloodsucker
4	Chainer's Edict
4	Diabolic Tutor
1	Haunting Echoes
3	Innocent Blood
4	Mind Sludge
4	Mutilate
4	Rancid Earth
1	Skeletal Scrying
3	Cabal Coffers
25	Swamp

sideboard

4	Braids, Cabal Minion
4	Faceless Butcher
2	Ghastly Demise
3	Mesmeric Fiend
2	Skeletal Scrying

Jens Thoren
- Monoblack -

4	Nantuko Shade
4	Shambling Swarm
4	Chainer's Edict
4	Diabolic Tutor
1	Haunting Echoes
4	Innocent Blood
4	Mind Sludge
4	Mutilate
4	Rancid Earth
1	Skeletal Scrying
2	Cabal Coffers
24	Swamp

sideboard

3	Ghastly Demise
2	Haunting Echoes
2	Laquatus's Champion
2	Last Rites
4	Mesmeric Fiend
2	Skeletal Scrying

Osyp Lebedowicz

- Blue-Black -

4	Psychatog
2	Shadowmage Infiltrator
4	Æther Burst
4	Chainer's Edict
4	Circular Logic
4	Concentrate
2	Obsessive Search
4	Peek
4	Predict
3	Syncopate
2	Upheaval
4	Darkwater Catacombs
12	Island
7	Swamp

sideboard

3	Ghastly Demise
2	Gloomdrifter
2	Innocent Blood
3	Skeletal Scrying
1	Upheaval
4	Zombie Infestation

The big question was what the mana in the deck should look like. There's little question that it should have been divided between swamps and Cabal Coffers. The Coffers is capable of producing ridiculous amounts of mana, but in the early game it produces nothing. It was a question of late-game play and overwhelming power versus early-game play and consistent draws. The first three lands played each game needed to be swamps. It wouldn't have been odd for Ruel to play early Cabal Coffers that weren't producing any mana because as long as he didn't need the mana right away, he wasn't actually falling behind. But it's not necessarily a good thing, either, and at any rate the deck needed three swamps by turn four. After the first four swamps were on the table, Cabal Coffers were just better than a swamp most of the time, and with cards like Diabolic Tutor and Nantuko Shade, the deck had plenty of good uses for the extra mana.

The other two decks, although both blue-black, had completely different ideas. Osyp Lebedowitz played a Psychatog deck that will look very familiar to anyone who's been playing Standard lately. The deck does one thing: find fuel for and back up its Psychatogs. It had a lot of ways to draw extra cards, from the cantrips Obsessive Search and Peek to Concentrate and Shadowmage Infiltrator. It had Circular Logic and Syncopate as counters. Finally, it had Upheaval, which combined well with Psychatog and is great in the format in general. It also had Æther Burst and Chainer's Edict, which were too good to pass up. In its sideboard, the deck had extra removal, an extra Upheaval, and four copies of Zombie Infestation. Against decks in which Psychatog is a bad game plan, a deck that can 'board into an Upheaval–Zombie Infestation combo deck could turn a problematic matchup into an excellent one.

Instead of playing a blue-black deck, Nicolas Olivieri played a black deck with a splash of blue. In particular, he had Shadowmage Infiltrator in his main deck and Aura Graft in his sideboard. In exchange, he had to sacrifice the use of Cabal Coffers. That made sense for him both because he had a much harder time using the Coffers and because of Braids. In his main deck were Braids backed up by Rancid Earth, Ichorid, and Mesmeric Fiend. His sideboard was centered on Faceless Butcher for creatures and Skeletal Scrying to draw cards in control battles. Without the need to sideboard against monoblack or the ability to use cards that depend on swamps, he had a lot of room to play with. He therefore finished with some general utility, including a Haunting Echoes, another Mindslicer, a Persuasion, and Slithery Stalkers for green. In such a tight format, getting even one matchup that you don't have to sideboard for can leave a deck with extra space.

How many different decks were there in the Top 8? All eight decks had different sources and had some different cards, so one answer is eight. Given that the three monoblack decks were so close and that two of the three blue-green decks were also close, a better answer would be five. Going by color combinations there were only three, but that wouldn't be fair to the format. White and red were weak colors, but there was plenty of room to maneuver, and those differences were the key to victory at Osaka.

Nicolas Olivieri

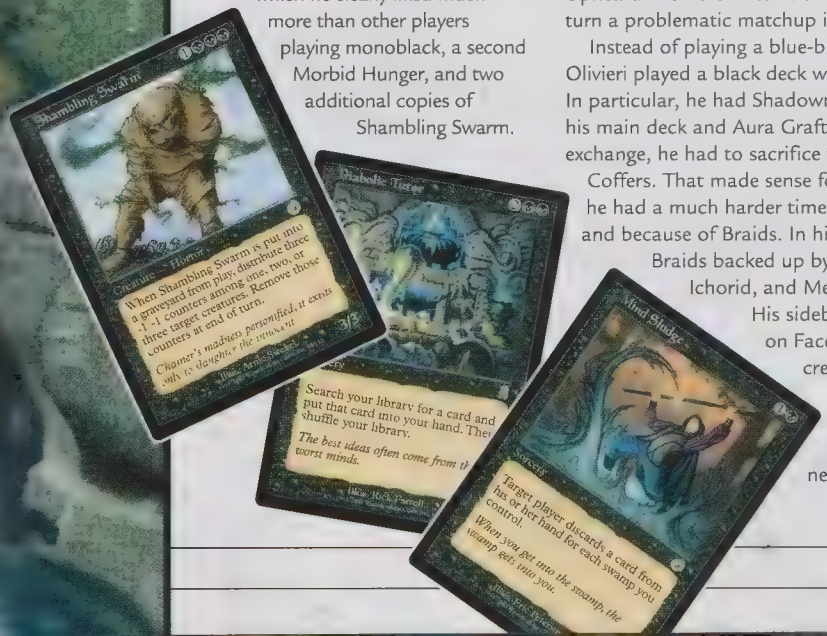
- Blue-Black -

4	Braids, Cabal Minion
2	Ichorid
4	Mesmeric Fiend
2	Mindslicer
4	Nantuko Shade
4	Shadowmage Infiltrator
4	Shambling Swarm
4	Chainer's Edict
3	Innocent Blood
4	Rancid Earth
4	Darkwater Catacombs
1	Island
16	Swamp
4	Tainted Isle

sideboard

2	Aura Graft
4	Faceless Butcher
1	Haunting Echoes
1	Mindslicer
1	Persuasion
3	Skeletal Scrying
2	Slithery Stalker

That put him at a severe disadvantage against both Squirrel Nest and other black decks. He cut two copies of Diabolic Tutor, which is odd given that he had only one main-deck Rancid Earth. Finally, he cut out the fourth Mutilate! While Mutilate doesn't interact perfectly with four Champions, this card seems far too powerful and too key to the deck to consider cutting one out. In his sideboard, Ruel didn't have much room to work with. There were the seven slots for Fiends and Braids and four more to reclaim Mutilate and Rancid Earth. All he had room for were the fourth Skeletal Scrying, which he clearly liked much more than other players playing monoblack, a second Morbid Hunger, and two additional copies of Shambling Swarm.


Shambling Swarm
When Shambling Swarm is put into a graveyard from play, distribute three -1/-1 counters among one, two, or three target creatures. Remove those counters at end of turn.
Chainer's maidens personified, it exists only to slaughter the innocent.
Diabolic Tutor
Search your library for a card and put that card into your hand. Then shuffle your library.
The best ideas often come from the worst minds.
Mind Sludge
Sorcery
Target player discards a card from his or her hand for each swamp you control.
When you get into the swamp, the swamp gets into you.

Extended Tech

by Brian Kibler

The last Extended Qualifier season saw the rise and dominance of a bizarre aggro-control deck called "Miracle Gro," which was most notable for its low land count and use of Quirion Dryad. The most popular version of the deck by the end of the season was "Super Gro," which splashed white for more powerful and efficient cards.

Super Gro

Super Gro
March 2002

4 Meddling Mage
2 Merfolk Looter
2 Mystic Enforcer
4 Quirion Dryad
4 Werebear
4 Brainstorm
4 Daze
2 Foil
4 Force of Will
4 Gush
4 Land Grant
4 Sleight of Hand
3 Swords to Plowshares
3 Winter Orb
2 Flood Plain
1 Island
1 Savannah
4 Tropical Island
4 Tundra

Sideboard

4 Chill
4 Legacy's Allure
3 Seal of Cleansing
3 Submerge
1 Swords to Plowshares

Quirion Dryad gets extraordinarily large very quickly with the deck's high concentration of nongreen cantrips and alternative-cost spells.

Whenever you play a white, blue, black, or red spell, put a +1 +1 counter on Quirion Dryad.

"Never underestimate the ability of natural forces to adapt to unnatural influences."
—Molimo, maro-sorcerer

Rounding out the creature base of the deck, these three serve the dual function of aggression and utility.

Draw a card, then discard a card from your hand.

Add to your mana pool.
Threshold — Werebear gets +3 +3 as long as seven or more cards are in your graveyard.

He exercises his right to bear arms.

As Meddling Mage comes into play, name a nonland card.
The named card can't be played

Meddling mages chant so loudly that no one can get a spell in edgewise.

Super Gro hits threshold extremely quickly, making this Nomad Mystic-turned-Dragon into a board-dominating force early in the game. Not even Morphling can beat the Enforcer in a straight-up fight.

Protection from black
Threshold — Mystic Enforcer gets +3 +3 and has flying. (You have threshold as long as seven or more cards are in your graveyard.)

A central component of any control or aggro-control deck in Extended, Force of Will counters key spells while leaving all your mana free to continue your assault.

You may pay 1 life and remove a blue card in your hand from the game instead of paying Force of Will's casting cost. Effects that prevent or redirect damage cannot be used to counter this loss of life. Counter target spell.

Low-to-no-cost deck manipulation and card drawing, these three cards keep the deck running smoothly while helping the Dryads to grow to enormous size.

Not as efficient as Force of Will, but since you can play only four of those, these do the job. Free countermagic is always good under Winter Orb.

Draw three cards, then put two cards from your hand on top of your library in any order

"I see more than others do because I know where to look."
—Saprazzan vizier

You may return two islands you control to their owner's hand instead of paying Gush's mana cost.
Draw two cards.

Don't trust your secrets to the sea.

Look at the top two cards of your library. Put one of them into your hand and the other on the bottom of your library.

"Most people believe magic is only a trick. Who changes their minds?"

You may discard an island and another card from your hand instead of paying Foil's mana cost.
Counter target spell.

You may return an island you control to its owner's hand instead of paying Daze's mana cost.
Counter target spell unless its controller pays 1.

Slows down decks not designed to operate with it in play.

The most efficient creature removal around and nearly worth the white splash by itself.

Remove target creature from the game. Its controller gains life equal to its power.
"Peace hath her victories
No less renound than war."
—John Milton, "To the Lord General Cromwell"

Counts as both forest and islands and is affected by spells that affect either Tap to add either or to your mana pool
Counts as both plains and forest and is affected by spells that affect either Tap to add either or to your mana pool
Counts as both islands and plains and is affected by spells that affect either Tap to add either or to your mana pool

At first glance, a mere ten lands seems insane—but it works.

If you have no land cards in hand, you may reveal your hand instead if paying Land Grant's mana cost. Search your library for a forest card and put that card into your hand. Then shuffle your library.

Land Grant allows Super Gro to play a remarkably low land count while still getting its mana consistently.

Flood Plain comes into play tapped.
, Sacrifice Flood Plain: Search your library for a plains or island card. Put that land into play. Shuffle your library afterwards.

The Flood Plains team up with Land Grant to smooth out your mana base, all the while aiding in achieving threshold.

SIDEBOARD

Remove target creature from the game. Its controller gains life equal to its power.
"Peace hath her victories
No less renound than war."
—John Milton, "To the Lord General Cromwell"

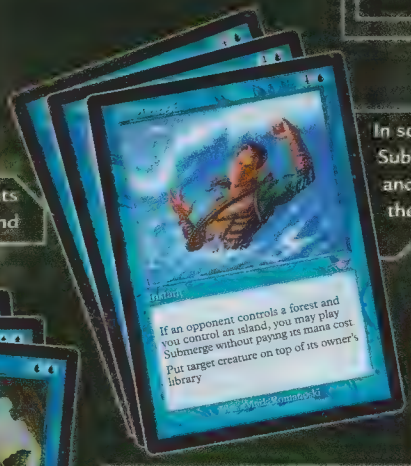
For creature-heavy decks, the fourth Plow sits in the 'board.

VARIATIONS

1. If creature-heavy strategies are extremely popular in your area, add the fourth Swords to Plowshares to the main deck at the expense of either Meddling Mage or a Daze.
2. If you expect a great deal of mirror matches, consider removing Merfolk Looters for main-deck copies of Legacy's Allure.

Sacrifice Seal of Cleansing: Destroy target artifact or enchantment
"I am the purifier, the light that clears all shadows."
—Seal inscription

Takes out troublesome enchantments and artifacts like Oath of Druids and Powder Keg.


Instant
If an opponent controls a forest and you control an island, you may play Submerge without paying its mana cost.
Put target creature on top of its owner's library

In some matchups, tempo is everything. Submerge sends huge Spiritmongers and Dryads right back to the top of their owners library.

During your upkeep, you may put a treasure counter on Legacy's Allure.
Sacrifice Legacy's Allure: Permanently gain control of target creature with power no greater than the number of treasure counters on Legacy's Allure

Control Magic just waiting to happen, Allure is extremely potent in mirror matches and against "Junk" and "Three-Deuce" decks with River Boa and Spectral Lynx.

Slows down dangerous "Sligh" decks until Mystic Enforcer arrives to mop things up.

Wizards of the Coast Profile
Magic: The Gathering R&D

by Aaron Forsythe

It's Tuesday morning, and the members of Wizards of the Coast's **Magic: The Gathering** Research & Development group are playing Sealed Deck.

At least that's what they call it.

There are no shrink-wrapped tournament packs or boosters; instead, the cards are lined up in long, black trays, sorted by color. Each participant is instructed to take about fourteen cards of each color, plus a few nonbasic lands and artifacts at random (no peeking!) from the trays.

The cards themselves don't even look like **Magic** cards as you know them. They consist of some old commons and lands, each with a sticker plastered over its card face. The new card's playtest name, cost, abilities, power, and toughness are all on the sticker—just like a normal card, except with no art, mana symbols, or flavor text. And several of them have handwritten corrections, made because the card proved too powerful, weak, or problematic in past sessions. Every few weeks, the company librarian has to reprint and resticker entire trays of playtest cards to accommodate all the changes a set goes through in the development process.

After building their decks, the participants pair off and sit wherever they can find flat space and two chairs. You'll recognize several of their names if you've been paying attention to **Magic** over the past few years—they have all appeared numerous times either at the top of Pro Tour standings or in the game's rulebook credits: Randy Buehler, William Jockusch, Henry Stern, Mike Donais, Mike Elliott, Worth Wollpert, Elaine Chase, and Charlie Catino.

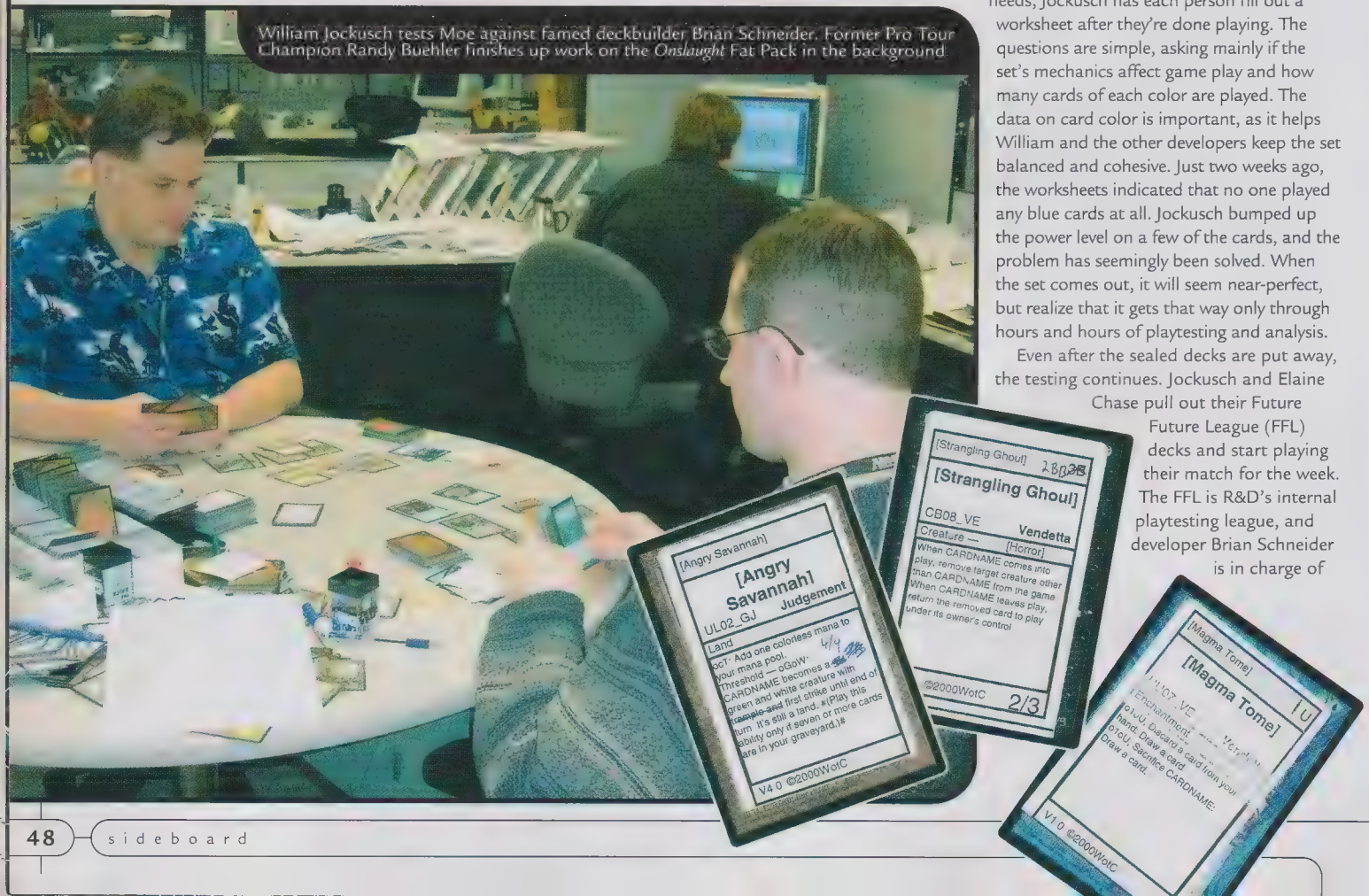
The set that they're currently working on is codenamed "Moe". Moe is the first small expansion in next year's *Onslaught* block, and it's due out at the beginning of 2003. The last set in the block, "Jack," is still in the design phase, and each day Worth writes a new Jack card on the white board for the team to discuss. *Onslaught* was codenamed "Manny" several months ago; the trio of names Manny, Moe, and Jack were taken from the Pep Boys automobile service centers. Each block is generally given a set of catchy names like that. *Odyssey, Torment,* and *Judgment* were named after the chemical element: "Argon," "Boron," and "Carbon". The block following *Onslaught* is composed of "Bacon," "Lettuce," and "Tomato".

Henry Stern and Mike Donais are locked in a titanic struggle, and the board is cluttered with creatures. Donais attacks with a flier, and Stern looks over the board for a moment and then blocks. Mike looks surprised. "That thing flies?" he asks, referring to Henry's blocker. Stern nods. "It didn't fly last week," Donais laments. Stern lets him take back his attack.

It's obvious from watching that the games are about determining the balance and feel of the set, not about determining an individual winner. Most of the cards being used are from *Onslaught*—which is basically finished—and the set developers need to make sure the Moe cards interact well with the *Onslaught* cards. If a card suddenly swings a game too far in one player's favor, the game comes to a halt and the card's merits are immediately brought under scrutiny. Possible fixes are entered into a computer database.

William Jockusch, a six-year veteran of Wizards of the Coast, is Moe's lead developer. It is his job to collect data from the rest of the team after the Sealed Deck session and then figure out how to use it to improve the set. In order to get the numbers he needs, Jockusch has each person fill out a worksheet after they're done playing. The questions are simple, asking mainly if the set's mechanics affect game play and how many cards of each color are played. The data on card color is important, as it helps William and the other developers keep the set balanced and cohesive. Just two weeks ago, the worksheets indicated that no one played any blue cards at all. Jockusch bumped up the power level on a few of the cards, and the problem has seemingly been solved. When the set comes out, it will seem near-perfect, but realize that it gets that way only through hours and hours of playtesting and analysis.

Even after the sealed decks are put away, the testing continues. Jockusch and Elaine Chase pull out their Future Future League (FFL) decks and start playing their match for the week. The FFL is R&D's internal playtesting league, and developer Brian Schneider is in charge of

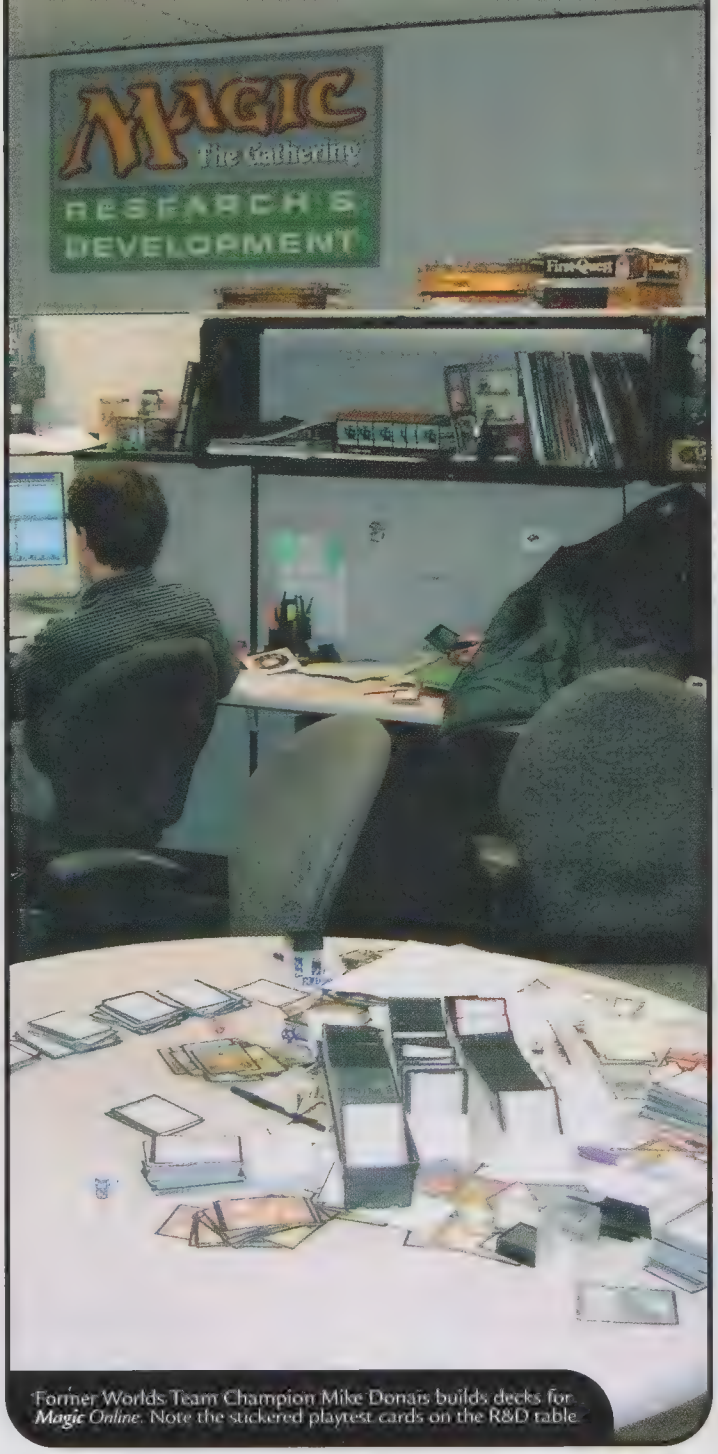


William Jockusch tests Moe against famed deckbuilder Brian Schneider. Former Pro Tour Champion Randy Buehler finishes up work on the *Onslaught* Fat Pack in the background.

the scheduling. Each league participant is required to play two to four matches per week with a deck made from a future Standard card pool. Participants report their decklists and results to Schneider by entering them into a computer database. Set developers then analyze wins, losses, and card choices and base decisions on Constructed-level cards accordingly.

Jockusch is playing a monoblack deck that gets most of its power from *Torment*—Nantuko Shade, Chainer's Edict, and Mutilate are all present. Sure, the deck has a few *Onslaught* and Moe cards, but it is basically a baseline deck that R&D expects to exist in the real world. Chase, on the other hand, plays the role of guinea pig with a green deck made almost exclusively from the newer block of cards. Consequently, Jockusch's deck contains mostly real versions of cards, while Chase's deck is all blanks with text handwritten in green Sharpie marker.

The games are close and competitive, which means the team is doing a good job on the Constructed aspect of the *Onslaught* block. One interesting situation arises, however, when Chase activates a new mechanic on one of her creatures. Donais, who has been watching most of the match, picks the card up and reads it aloud. He gets no reaction. "Don't you see the problem?" he asks the group. Being a level 4 judge, Donais can see deep into a card's intricacies, noticing rules conflicts where most people—even people in R&D—would not. He then asks me (I'm sitting there quietly taking notes, mind you) what would happen if both of the creature's abilities were activated in the same turn. I give the wrong answer, and Paul Barclay, the resident rules expert, explains why. "The card is counterintuitive," Mike says, "I don't like it." I've been playing **Magic** for seven years, so if a card confuses me, I imagine most people would interpret it incorrectly. I don't expect the card to last another week in its current incarnation.



Former Worlds Team Champion Mike Donais builds decks for *Magic Online*. Note the stickered playtest cards on the R&D table.

Constructed cards get modified on the fly all the time. A few weeks ago, Randy Buehler was playing with a red *Onslaught* creature nicknamed the "Gatling Gunner". The creature was a surprise hit in the FFL, and was dominating games whenever it hit the table. "1 ● (pronounced 'one R') isn't enough for this card," Buehler announced in the middle of a match. Stern and Wollpert concurred, and suggestions were blurted out. Changing the card's mana cost to ●● didn't seem like enough, which meant 2 ● was the obvious choice. Someone then suggested that the card's cost remain 1 ● but that it come into play tapped, which would hinder its ability. Stern reasoned that coming into play tapped was inelegant and would detract from the card too much, so its mana cost was changed to 2 ●, where it remains to this day. (The name Gatling Gunner, by the way, has also been changed.)

While it may seem that R&D is spending all of its time developing Moe, that is certainly not the case. As mentioned above, Wollpert, among others, is constantly tinkering with the design of Jack, and Mark Rosewater, one of the department's senior designers, is hard at work on Bacon. Mark is the lead designer on Bacon, and he is heading up a team of three other people who are working feverishly to get the set's mechanics and themes ironed out to the point where Sealed Deck can be played using just the commons. Bacon will not hit the shelves for another eighteen months, but the designers need to get the main ideas down on paper very early, allowing enough time to regroup if entire mechanics or themes need to be reworked or scrapped during early development.

As on most Tuesdays, the bulk of R&D's afternoon is spent in a departmental "**Magic** meeting." As the R&D members file into a conference room, Randy Buehler, the head of **Magic** development, passes out packets containing data from Pro Tour–Osaka, including decklists, card counts, and color breakdowns that he downloaded from **Sideboard.com**.

After each big professional event, the **Magic** team takes a moment to reflect on the current in-print sets (as opposed to future works-in-progress) and what the top players are saying about the environment. Even though professional players make up only a small portion of the **Magic**-playing population, they are important to R&D for several reasons. The main one is that pros do the most rigorous postrelease analysis of new cards, finding combinations and interactions that even R&D misses from time to time. Second, pros give useful feedback regarding the health of the game on a competitive level. If a Pro Tour environment becomes unstable or degenerate, it adversely affects all levels of tournament play. With that information in mind, R&D takes long, hard looks at all the Pro Tour data.

The format for Pro Tour–Osaka was Block Constructed using only the *Odyssey* and *Torment* expansions, and the lack of white and red cards in the top decks caused a little bit of concern. The strength of black was taken as a good sign because it meant that *Torment* impacted the environment almost exactly as anticipated. Black aside, though, the other colors seemed out of whack. Buehler pressed the group for their thoughts.

Robert Gutschera, a long-time developer, suggested that part of the reason for the disparity was that Wild Mongrel is too good, and it was over-represented at the expense of other colors. Several members of the team agreed. Charlie Catino, the vice president of trading card game R&D, added that making enablers—cards that interact strongly with block mechanics—too powerful on their own could be problematic. Notes were scribbled down, and the team was satisfied that they had found the format's weakness and could make a conscious effort to correct it in future blocks. Cards from *Onslaught* and Moe were mentioned as possible parallel problems, and they were all talked through.

As the meeting adjourned, Buehler gave the Osaka environment a passing grade, noting that Block Constructed is a difficult format to predict. Stern predicted that things will certainly get better and more interesting once *Judgment* is added to the mix, and hopes were high that the Pro Tour Qualifier season using all three sets would be a good one.

And with that, the members of R&D went back to the grind of making sure that Qualifier seasons—and all games of **Magic**, for that matter—will be fun and interesting for years to come.

Country Profile
Japan

by Josh Bennett

Although it routinely hosts the most-attended events, Japan is only now being recognized as a force in the international **Magic** community. How did this happen? How did **Magic** get to Japan, and how did the Japanese pros get to where they are now?

Magic arrived in Japan fairly soon after the game debuted. You could find packs of it in shops, but there wasn't any community to speak of. For starters, the cards were printed exclusively in English. This obviously limited the number of Japanese players. Of those, many weren't fluent in English. That led to a lot of misapplied rules. **Magic** is a pretty complex game. It's easy for intuition and shaky language skills to lead you astray. So in the early days, most **Magic** players in Japan were either native English speakers or working under some bizarre house rules. Nevertheless, it soon had a bona fide following.

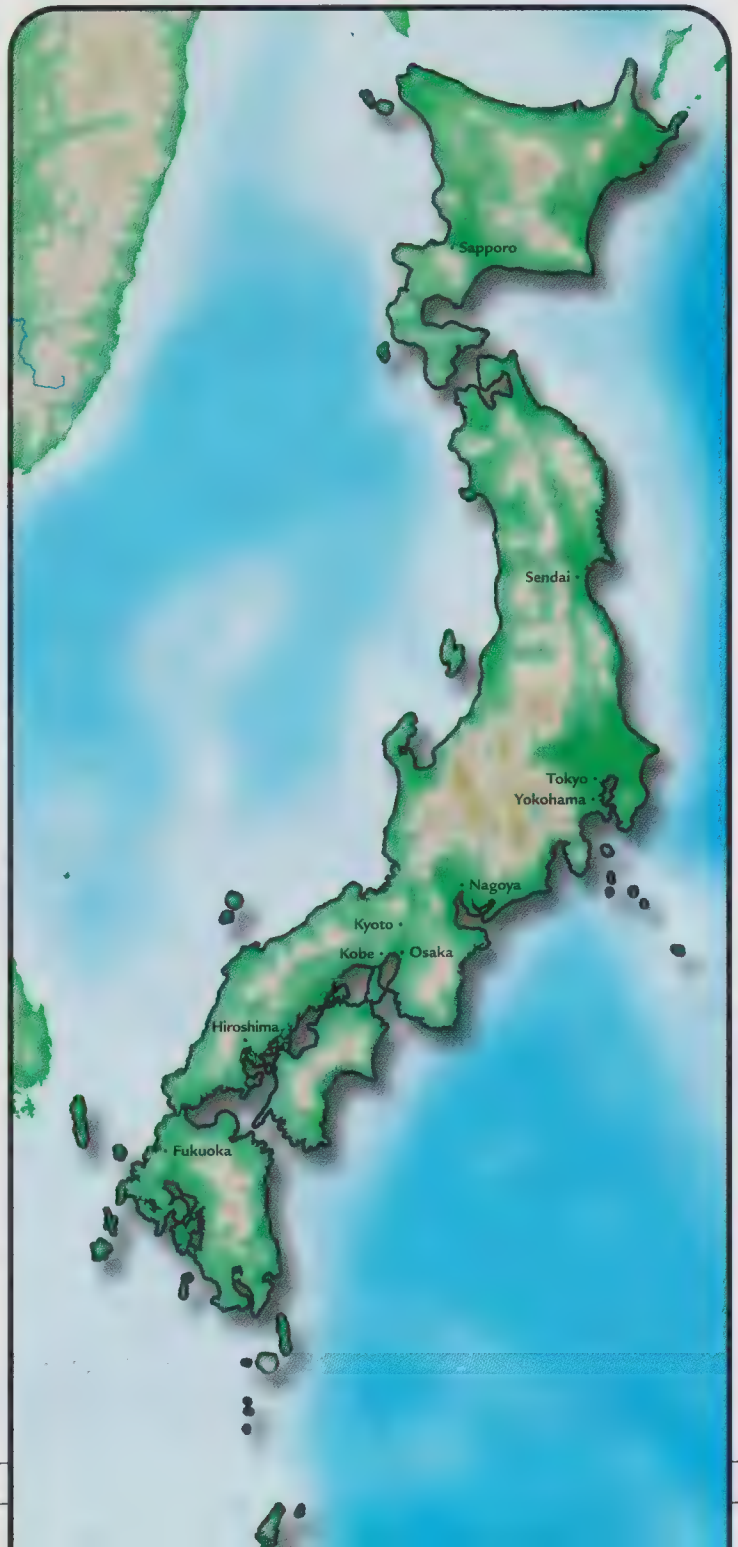
Those days didn't last long. In 1995, Hobby Japan President Koichiro Satou met Wizards of the Coast founder Peter Adkison at a GAMA show in New Orleans. Satou was always on the lookout for "The Next Big Thing," and at this show he struck gold. **Magic** was everywhere. Everyone had a deck. No matter where you looked, people were sitting down to impromptu matches.

It didn't take Satou long to become captivated by the game. He watched a few games and liked what he saw: a fast-paced, portable, highly visual game. Best of all, everyone was having a ball playing it. He didn't understand all the game's mechanics, but he knew it was going to be big.

So he found Adkison and introduced himself. By the end of the evening, the two had hammered out a gentleman's agreement that guaranteed Hobby Japan full **Magic** distribution rights in Japan. With the backing of Hobby, the **Magic** game's popularity grew quickly. Soon there was instruction for newer players. Japanese-language rules were made available. Almost all of the old confusion and "convention" were removed. Of course, it was only a matter of time before there were Japanese-language cards. The *Fourth Edition* set was the first expansion to be translated into Japanese, and it sold like hotcakes. A whole new audience was accessing the game.

That period of growth continued unabated for some time, and with it came competition. One Japanese player stood above the rest: Toshiki Tsukamoto. After conquering Japanese Nationals twice, he was suddenly "The Champ" to everyone. His repeated success drove players to work harder at their games. He kept them on their toes, and he was never far from the top table at tournaments.

1997 Grand Prix–Tokyo set the first standard for attendance at a Japanese Grand Prix event. A whopping nine hundred players showed up to play *Mirage* Sealed Deck. Naturally, Tsukamoto was in the Top 8, as was the then up-and-coming Satoshi Nakamura, but it was the imposing Ken'ichi Fujita who won the day. Disaster struck, however, when he tried to accept his trophy. In his words, he "cast Shatter on it," dropping it as it was being handed to him. It exploded into a hundred pieces. When he asked Tournament Manager Andrew Finch for a replacement, Finch told him, "Win another Grand Prix." Fujita went on to do just that at 1999 Grand Prix–Taipei. This time, the trophy survived.



Shortly after the release of the *Tempest* set, the DCI Center opened in Tokyo. It is today as it was then—a mecca for DCI-sanctioned **Magic**, offering daily sanctioned tournaments. This was a big deal back then because tournament sanctioning was still a scary and mysterious process. The pros flocked to it, eager to game with the best. Even today, you can stroll in to sit down at an eight-person draft that looks more like a Top 8.

The DCI Center effectively made Tokyo the center of Japan's **Magic** universe. The higher caliber of play reinforced itself. This cycle expanded when Muneo Shibata opened his own tournament center in Osaka. Its success started a ripple effect, and soon every region had its own hotbed. These, in turn, created powerhouse players. They showed their might locally in Japan's two biggest domestic tournaments. The first is the High School Championship. The second, and more prestigious, is simply called "The Finals." Featuring both Standard and Extended, The Finals carries a hefty one million yen purse. Historically, the winner of The Finals is either a player who dominated that year, as it was when Tsukamoto won, or someone who later becomes a dominant player, such as Nakamura or Tadayoshi Komiya.

Japan was due to step out onto the world stage. Its first major international achievement came in 1998 when Satoshi Nakamura became Asia-Pacific champion by defeating compatriot Kiyoshi "The Japanese Zvi" Sasanumo in the final. His win not only avenged Japan's loss to Australia the year

before, but also marked the start of Japan's dominance of that event. A Japanese player would go on to win every subsequent APAC until the event was canceled this year. For his victory, Nakamura was offered his choice of a car or a huge bag of cash. He doesn't drive.

For a long time after that, Nakamura was the face of Japanese **Magic** to the rest of the world. His APAC victory gave him a slot at the prestigious **Magic** Invitational. He was a regular on the Pro Tour, where his outgoing personality and penchant for strange and exciting hats (earning him his nickname "Hatman") made him well known. In his shadow was Itaru Ishida, who could always be seen in his bright yellow Future Bee jacket. Originally discounted on the Tour, their talents were slowly being recognized by their fellow players.

Through all of this, however, Japanese players were at a disadvantage. They were in "tech" solitude. Players didn't share their knowledge. The idea of a group of players working together to develop strong decks was completely foreign. There was no Japanese equivalent of The Dojo. Worse, the language barrier prevented them from taking advantage of available English-language resources. Nowhere was this more evident than Worlds 1998. Most of the Japanese players showed up playing Living Death. Now, the rest of the world had been tipped off that Portcullis hosed Living Death, but not the Japanese. As a result, they were crushed. The cries for more public discussion grew louder.

Focus began to shift to Japan when the World Championships were held there in 1999. The real turning point, however, was 2000 Grand Prix–Nagoya, and not just because it was the first non-Japanese victory at a Japanese Grand Prix event. Going into the event, Ken'ichi Fujita and Tadayoshi Komiya both had two titles to their names. Kai Budde, fresh off his Worlds victory, had three. He asked Alex Shvartsman to smash Nagoya, ensuring that he would remain the only player to hold three titles. And while Shvartsman did just that, it was clear that Japan was being noticed. The number of Japanese Grand Prix events was growing, from three in 2000 to five in 2001. Also, more non-Japan residents were making the trip over to compete.

In 2001, Japan really came into its own. First, the Japanese *Sideboard* website went online, providing strategy and event coverage. With articles from some of the top Japanese pros and translations of English-language articles, the website was buried under a barrage of hits. Finally, there was somewhere for Japanese players to turn for up-to-date information, and they were devouring it.

The next major success for the Japanese came at 2001 Pro Tour–Los Angeles. In round 14, Ken'ichi Fujita was just one match win away from becoming the first Japanese player to reach a Pro Tour Top 8. He sat down to face none other than Satoshi Nakamura. The match went to three games, and Nakamura won it. His 11th-place finish was the highest of any Japanese player to that point, but it still stung for Japan to have come so close and miss.

Fortunately, they didn't have to wait long to make up for it. Just a month later, Tsuyoshi "Mr. Rolly" Fujita—so called because of his round features and easygoing nature—crossed that threshold at Pro Tour–Tokyo. Fujita had earned the right to play with his victory at Grand Prix–Kyoto, and all through Day 2 the applause that followed his match wins could be heard throughout the venue. When his name was announced for the Top 8, cheers filled the halls and players actually lifted Fujita onto their shoulders. He did them proud, smashing through to the final before being defeated by Zvi Mowshowitz. For Fujita, it was like a dream come true to stand so strong among the players and deckbuilders he admired so much.

But Fujita's wasn't the only monster performance. Panzer Hunters, the team composed of Ishida, Reiji Ando, and Kazuyuki Momose was busy ripping up the Tokyo Masters Series. They dispatched team Outland of Norway, and Pro Tour–New York Finalists Car Acrobatic Team before losing in the final to Gateway winners Team ABU. Though it was far from the picture-perfect Japanese dominance that most had hoped for, Pro Tour–Tokyo showed what Japan was capable of.

Panzer Hunters have two consecutive Masters finals on their résumé.

Later at Worlds, Japan again came just short of greatness. Katsuhiro Mori and Jin Okamoto took ninth and tenth places, respectively, and even then only on tiebreakers. Mori's finish, however, was good enough to push him past Lawrence Creech and Ken Ho to claim the Rookie of the Year title. A familiar face on the Tour, Mori is easily recognizable by his lightning-fast play speed.

So much success in 2001 clearly indicates that 2002 is going to be a big year for Japan. Okamoto has already put up another Pro Tour ninth-place finish, this time at San Diego. Former giant Goro Matsuo came out of retirement to win Japanese Nationals, showing that although the new blood is strong, the old pros are still in the hunt. Ishida claimed victory at Grand Prix–Kobe (at 1,350 players the largest Grand Prix event to date), and took The Finals, making him a safe bet for big things. It won't be long before Japan moves from the wings to center stage.

Player Profile
Brian Hegstad

by Gary Wise

Brian Hegstad doesn't look for trouble, but it seems to find him. Since bursting onto the Pro Tour scene a little over a year ago, Hegstad has found himself knee-deep in controversy, with everyone from his teammates to his opponents causing the kinds of problems that can land a person in some pretty hot water.

After a few mediocre Pro Tour performances, Hegstad made his way to U.S. Nationals where he became a part of **Magic** lore, earning a coveted spot on the national team with his second-place finish. But his accomplishment was not without controversy. In the final round of the Swiss, Hegstad played for a spot in the Top 8 against Pete Leiher, who was awarded a game loss that gave Hegstad the match. Then, in the quarterfinals, Hegstad won when Casey McCarrell was disqualified for stacking Hegstad's deck. It was winning made ugly, but once Hegstad got to the promised land, he made the best of it.

Along with Trevor Blackwell and Eugene Harvey, Hegstad was able to stage one of the great comebacks in Pro Tour history, as the U.S. national team came back from 43rd place on Day 1 to defeat Norway in the final. While this performance wasn't quite enough to keep Hegstad from losing the Rookie of the Year race to Katsuhiro Mori, it was apparent to anyone who was paying attention that Hegstad's Nationals success was anything but a fluke. He was on the Tour to stay.

Hegstad sometimes found his own reputation being questioned because of his Pro Tour affiliations. A member of the former team AlphaBetaUnlimited.com, Hegstad found his own ethics being questioned because of the reputations earned by some of his teammates. But as Hegstad has been quick to point out, the assumption of guilt by association is an unfair one.

"I think at times I feel like I'm watched a lot more closely than other players because I wear an ABU shirt," said the Vancouver, Washington, native. "I understand the desire to keep cheating out of the game, but at the same time, I wish I didn't have to feel persecuted because of who my friends are." Hegstad is quick to add that he doesn't cheat—a claim he backs up with a clean record.

Despite his affiliations or because of them, Hegstad has transformed himself into one of the Pro Tour's top players. Playing and working with Pro Tour mainstays such as Chris Benafel, Noah Boeken, and best friend Phil Freneau, Hegstad's game has developed relatively quickly as he learns from some of the best players.

After the U.S. team's success at the World Championships, Hegstad took to the Grand Prix circuit as Benafel did before him, finding success in Minneapolis where he made the semifinals, one match better than he did at Hong Kong. The most notable effect of these successes has been felt in his rating, which qualified him for his first Master Series (in New Orleans), where he lost in the Top 16 to Zvi Mowshowitz before finishing 14th in the main event—his strongest showing to date. That was only the beginning, however, as he triumphed over Mike Pustilnik, Brock Parker, and Benedict Klauser before eventually succumbing to eventual champ and teammate Ryan Fuller at the San Diego Masters.

"I really wanted to beat Ryan. We did a money split, but I wanted to win the tournament," said Hegstad, who revealed that the personal achievement involved with Pro Tour success is as important to him as the money he's won. "I think the respect I would have gotten for winning would have been important to me."

> **"I think at times I feel like I'm watched a lot more closely than other players because I wear an ABU shirt."**

Hegstad has already received respect from members of the **Magic** community for choosing to be open about his homosexuality, a courageous decision in a community that has at times been plagued by the tendency to mock such things. "I've had nothing but positive experiences since my decision. My friends have all been pretty cool about it, and it feels like it's pretty much a nonissue," he said.

With AlphaBetaUnlimited.com no longer affiliated with their former sponsors, the team officially disbanded, allowing them to spread their wings as far as Pro Tour affiliations go. Hegstad joined Benafel, Peter Szigeti, Jeff Fung, Terry Tsang, Jeff Cunningham, Ken Ho, and Brett Shears in entering the **Magic** Colony, a reality TV–style experiment in Pro Tour preparation aided by new playtesting acquaintances Brian Kibler and Ben Rubin. It was Kibler's deck that Hegstad piloted to the San Diego Masters semifinals—the largest contributor to Hegstad's lifetime earnings of over $45,000.

Whether these new acquaintances will help Hegstad continue his successful rise is unknown, but with the trials of the last year behind him, getting away from the controversy should only help the Pro Tour sophomore. With the tough decision to be honest and the chaos of his rookie season behind him, things should only get better. If nothing else, it will be easier to focus on attacking for 2.

Player Profile
Alex Shvartsman

by Gary Wise

There are lots of ways to earn a dollar in **Magic**. Winning tournaments, writing, selling cards . . . if you can do it in this game, and do it well enough, there's money to be made, and no one player in Pro Tour history has done it like Alex Shvartsman.

With a slight Russian accent to his supremely confident voice, Shvartsman has done it all, trotting the globe more consistently than any player in the game's history. If there's been a major **Magic** event over the last few years, Shvartsman has been there, playing and selling cards, and he somehow finds time to write about it afterward. The man has been called "The King of the Grand Prix," but "The Energizer Bunny" might be more appropriate. Simply put, Shvartsman never stops.

Much has been made of the lack of results put up by Shvartsman on the Pro Tour, but you can't ignore everything else. Three Grand Prix wins, countless Grand Prix Top 8s, and an incalculable contribution to the game have left their mark, all adding up to one, undebatable conclusion: Alex Shvartsman is a true **Magic** star.

Shvartsman has been around the Pro Tour for a long time, with his first appearance coming at 1997 Pro Tour–Los Angeles. After a poor showing there, he did a lot better at Pro Tour–Paris, where he finished 36th, but that wasn't good enough to earn him a return invitation, and he promptly fell off the Tour for over a year. When he finally made it back for Pro Tour–Rome, he again had trouble, but it was then that Shvartsman started taking a more serious approach toward his gaming.

Shvartsman started attending Grand Prix events outside the United States, and it immediately started paying dividends. He came second at Grand Prix–Barcelona, seventh at Taipei, fourth at Sao Paulo, and first at Tours in 1999, finally hitting it big with a 14th-place finish at Pro Tour–London. Shvartsman was using the tournaments to further his card-singles business, bringing employees with him to sell his cards while he played, and the results were staggering. His business was thriving and his game was noticeably picking up.

In 2000, Shvartsman made three more Grand Prix Top 8s—spanning Asia, North America, and Europe—and found himself in the thick of the Player of the Year race. While in the end, both he and frontrunner Darwin Kastle were surpassed by Worlds finalist Bob Maher, there was no doubt that Shvartsman had stumbled upon a new recipe for success, pioneering the idea of the Grand Prix professional that has since been adopted by pros such as Chris Benafel and Mike Pustilnik.

The man has been called "The King of the Grand Prix," but "The Energizer Bunny" might be more appropriate.

In some ways, the 2000–2001 season was a disappointment for Shvartsman. A 26th-place finish in Chicago was his best Pro Tour showing since London, but he faltered on the Grand Prix circuit, with his final appearance in Rio his only Top 8. Shvartsman stumbled in the Player of the Year standings as other pros followed his example of traveling to multiple Grand Prix events. Fortunately, Shvartsman was still reaping the benefits of the previous season, as he earned an invitation to his first **Magic** Invitational in Sydney, Australia.

With 2000–2001 behind him, Shvartsman started the 2001–2002 season with a bang. With all of his Grand Prix success, Shvartsman's detractors couldn't help but point out that his successes had mostly come in less-developed **Magic** nations, and suggested that his lack of a Pro Tour Top 8 was evidence that he couldn't compete with the big boys. Shvartsman teamed up with his old friend Zvi Mowshowitz and free agent Justin Gary to form team Illuminati for Pro Tour–New York, and the results spoke for themselves. An undefeated Day 1 led to a Top 4 berth at Madison Square Garden, and while Illuminati eventually lost to Les Plus Class, Shvartsman had finally played on Sunday on the Pro Tour. The demons had been put to rest.

With his New York finish and repeated Grand Prix triumphs, Shvartsman found himself trailing only Kai Budde in the Player of the Year race, but even that level of success doesn't account for his overall popularity. For that, one must note his contributions to the **Magic** community. Shvartsman has also been involved with **meridianmagic.com**, **neutralground.com**, **sideboard.com**, and countless other websites, making him one of the most active Internet personalities in the game. His popular column, "Week in Review," is one of *Sideboard* Online's most popular features, and he also makes contributions to *Sideboard* magazine, for which he's recently served as resident expert in all matters concerning card values. In short, if there's been an online or paper publication of importance in the **Magic** community, Shvartsman's byline has appeared on it at some point.

With three Grand Prix victories, his Sunday appearance at Pro Tour–New York, a thriving business, and a strong following for his writing, Shvartsman seemingly has it all. He continues to travel to foreign markets to sell cards and dominate Grand Prix events, and he seems likely to continue doing so for the foreseeable future. His critics have been silenced, he continues to make regular Masters Series appearances, and he's started to perform consistently on Tour. Not a bad way to make a buck.

Torment Design

Mark's Contribution

by Mark Rosewater

This issue, I thought it might be fun to look at several Torment *cards I designed (or had a hand in designing). The interesting part of this discussion is that I wasn't on the* Torment *design team. So how did I end up with cards in a set I didn't design? Read on.*

Using Leftovers

A designer can get cards in sets he or she didn't work on in numerous ways. First, when a design team is creating a set, they often look to cards that were stranded from previous sets. For example, Anurid Scavenger started off as an *Odyssey* card called Compost Elemental (which was the same card except it was 4/4 instead of 3/3 and didn't have protection from black).

Compost Elemental came about during *Odyssey* (then called "Argon") design as the team (of which I was a member) focused on milling. If blue could put cards from the library into the graveyard, why couldn't green, blue's enemy, put cards from the graveyard back into the library? Thus "restocking" was born. When you restocked a card, you put it from the graveyard onto the bottom of your library. Restocking worked as both a graveyard cost (you needed cards in your graveyard to pay it) and as an antimilling measure.

During *Odyssey* development, the milling theme was turned way down to play up other aspects of graveyard interaction. Restocking, while interesting, proved very disruptive to reaching threshold. The development team thought that restocking would be better if left for later in the block. During *Torment* design, lead designer Bill Rose decided to add two creatures, Gurzigost and Anurid Scavenger, with restocking upkeep costs.

Anurid Scavenger was originally called Compost Elemental.

Borrowing from the Future

If design often borrows from the past, development occasionally borrows from the future. While development of one set is going on, one or more design teams are often working on another set even farther ahead. This leads to the common R&D practice of stealing from a future set. Basically, the rules work like this: The set closest to being released has priority over any card. This means if development has holes to fill, they're allowed to steal from the sets in design. Gemstone Mine, for example, was a *Tempest* card I created that got stolen by the *Weatherlight* development team.

During *Torment* development, I was working on the *Judgment* design team. The *Torment* team was looking for a small mechanic they could put on a few blue creatures. Just a day earlier, I had created a blue creature that milled cards whenever it was targeted. Henry Stern, the lead *Torment* developer, saw the creature and liked it—so much so, in fact, that it appeared the next day in the *Torment* file. The card ended up being called Cephalid Aristocrat. The development team later created a creature, called Cephalid Illusionist, with a similar mechanic.

As a quick side note, it is interesting to point out that development teams often design cards during development. Both Mutilate and Mind Sludge, for example, were created by the *Torment* development team.

Here are a few hints of what to expect in *Judgment*:

- Cards with activation costs never before used in Magic
- A white enchantment that keeps you from being targeted or taking any damage
- A flying, trampling, 7/7 dragon for {3}{R}{R}{R} (with a "small" drawback)
- A green sorcery capable of destroying a creature
- A red enchantment that can counter spells

Here are a few names from *Judgment*:

- Funeral Pyre
- Death Wish
- Aven Warcraft
- Wormfang Behemoth
- Epic Struggle
- Spelljack

"I Got a Hole in Me Set!"

Probably the most common way that designers get their cards into other sets is that development teams ask for submissions whenever they have holes to fill in a set's card file. Filling holes is a good challenge for designers because development teams usually have very specific needs. One good example, from *Torment*, was that the development team was looking for cards for a monoblack deck. The trick was that the team didn't want the cards to fit into a creature-light, black-white control deck that was, at the time, dominating the FFL (Future Future League). In addition, the team wanted the cards to help the monoblack deck fight against the black-white deck.

To fill this void, I created two cards: Ichorid and Dawn of the Dead. The heavy creature requirement of both cards made them useless to the black-white deck, while the recursive element made them effective threats against control decks.

Design of the Times

I hope this discussion has given you a little insight into the role of game designers. Our work can sit in a computer file for years or be ripped from a file before a design is even finished. Other times, we act as repair people, making patches to fill voids created by the development process. But regardless of how it happens, design is a pretty cool job. Most jobs deal with what is. Design allows us to focus on what can be.

Outsider Trading

Black Is Back

Torment Shakes Things Up

by Alex Shvartsman

*In this month's installment of Outsider Trading, instead of focusing on one topic, we take a look at two different aspects of collecting and trading **Magic** cards.*

Black Is Back

I was tempted to put a swamp in the first position of the "Power 9" chart. Sure, it's not an expensive card—but you will want to dust off two dozen of them because of all the cool black cards available in the *Torment* set. The most sought-after new rare is Nantuko Shade. Pumpable creatures have been around since Limited Edition Alpha, but now we've got one in an undercosted, mana-efficient form. To go along with the Shade, there is now a Wrath of God in black! In a monoblack deck, Mutilate is as good as Wrath, capable of taking out even the largest creatures. Combined with powerful cards such as Corrupt and Mind Sludge, these two rares should resurrect the monoblack archetype. Perhaps Phyrexian Scuta will finally see some play and rise in trade value, too.

The best rare in the set, in my opinion, is Grim Lavamancer. This card is awesome in "Sligh" and in red-green beatdown decks. Some of the other rares worth trading for are Ambassador Laquatus, Shambling Swarm, Skullscorch, Gurzigost, and the various Dreams. The big letdown of the set was Sengir Vampire. Players simply did not warm up to this reprint the way they did to Serra Angel when it showed up in *Seventh Edition*.

Online Cards

Very soon now, ***Magic** Online* will go live. No more free drafts—players will have to pay for the booster packs. This also means, however, that the cards they open are going to have value. How are they going to stack up against "real world" values? I predict that over the first several months, even the best online rares will be inexpensive. Because few people will have a large enough pool of cards to play Constructed formats, the demand for singles will be comparably low. After about six months, plenty of people should have sufficient collections to build competitive decks. Players will either gather enough cards through drafting or build up their collections by opening packs and trading for what they need. The secondary market will thrive, with some of the more sought-after cards skyrocketing in value, even beyond that of their physical kin. In the long run, prices will likely stabilize and, with minor variations, match physical card prices.

— Alex's Power 9 —

The Cards That Are Currently in the Highest Demand

1

Put a 3/3 green Elephant creature token into play.
Flashback 3
(You may play this card from your graveyard for its flashback cost. Then remove it from the game.)

Elephants continue to dominate—if not Standard, then at least the trade binders

2

Shadowmage Infiltrator can't be blocked except by artifact creatures and/or black creatures.
Whenever Shadowmage Infiltrator deals combat damage to a player, you may draw a card.

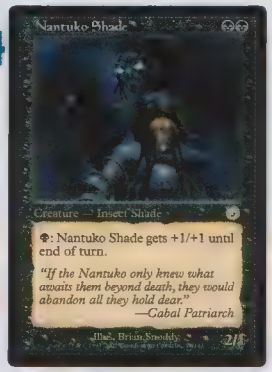
Out of the public eye at recent Pro Tour events. "Finkel" is still near the top of the charts.

3

Kicker 8
(You may pay an additional 8 as you play this spell.)
Urza's Rage can't be countered by spells or abilities
Urza's Rage deals 3 damage to target creature or player. If you paid the kicker cost, instead Urza's Rage deals 10 damage to that creature or player and the damage can't be prevented

While other *Invasion* block cards fall slightly lower on the charts, Rage remains at the top

4


Nantuko Shade
Creature — Insect Shade
: Nantuko Shade gets +1/+1 until end of turn.
"If the Nantuko only knew what awaits them beyond death, they would abandon all they hold dear."
—Cabal Patriarch

It is only fair that the *Torment* set's darkest creature is also its top performer. Incredible performer at Pro Tour–Osaka.

5

Psychatog decks keep this card far ahead of its white-blue counterpart, Absorb.

6

Mutilate
Sorcery
All creatures get -1/-1 until end of turn for each swamp you control.
"They appreciate my handiwork. I hear their joy in every scream."
—Chainer, dementia master

Black Wrath of God! Very popular at Pro Tour–Osaka

7

Continues its downward trend over the last several months, but still the best mana-producer in the modern era.

8

, , Remove two cards in your graveyard from the game: Grim Lavamancer deals 2 damage to target creature or player.
"Fools dig for water, corpses, or gold. The earth's real treasure is far deeper."

Sligh fans won't be grim with this critter around. Best creature since Jackal Pup.

9

Reveal the top five cards of your library. An opponent separates those cards into two face-up piles. Put one pile into your hand and the other into your graveyard.

It may be only uncommon, but many dealers are paying $1–3 for it these days.

DCI Global Rankings

This section highlights the Top 10 ranked players from each country. It uses DCI Composite ratings, which are the averages of the players' Limited and Constructed ratings. Only countries that have at least ten players with Composite ratings are included. The number of sanctioned matches that each person has played is also included. DCI ratings are updated every week on Tuesday night, Pacific time. Wednesday is the best time to view updated ratings.

These ratings are from Wednesday, March 20, 2002. For the most updated ratings and rankings, visit www.thedci.com.

Argentina

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Matias Gabrenja	Buenos Aires	1959	429
2	Diego Ostrovich	Buenos Aires	1933	951
4	Lucas Ramirez	Merlo	1900	525
5	Matias Bollati	Cordoba	1898	302
6	Jose Barbero	Campana	1894	491
6	Ernesto Mingorance	Buenos Aires	1894	557
10	Franco Biasetti	Buenos Aires	1861	727

Australia

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Andrew Gordon	Eltham	1951	438
2	Michael Doecke	Adelaide	1940	431
4	Dante Rosati	Glen Iris	1914	184
5	Ben Seck	Sydney	1902	1521
5	Andrew Grain	Melbourne	1902	415
7	Oliver Oks	Adelaide	1893	577
10	Daniel Reimans	Brisbane	1887	217

Austria

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Benedikt Klauser			
2	Helmut Summersberger			
4	Stefan Jedlicka	Vienna		
5	Florian Oberauer	Salzburg		
6	Markus Joebstl			
7	Stephan Genser			
9	Philipp Raich	Vienna	1879	504

Belgium

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
8	Dominique Coene	Heverlee	1866	428
9	Kurt Verbinnen	Rotselaar	1862	498

Brazil

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
8	Ricardo de Barros	Jundiai	1894	406
9	Fernando Bandeira	Curitiba	1886	445

Canada

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
8	Steven Wolfman	Toronto	1938	1394
9	Roland Aw	Edmonton		
10	Elijah Pollock	Scarborough	1926	604

Chile

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Rodrigo Sanchez Albert	Santiago	1945	254
2	Jose Capdevila	Santiago	1923	472
4	Jose Paredes	Santiago	1894	202
6	Jose Zegarra	Santiago	1869	174
8	Camargo Andres	Santiago	1867	432
9	Sebastian Suter	Santiago	1841	297

China

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
2	Ning Zhang	Beijing	1786	153
4	Jun Cai	Shanghai	1782	191
7	Shu Nu Zhang	Shanghai	1760	177
8	Pu He	Chongqing	1756	182
9	Zhen Li	Chongqing	1755	196

Croatia

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
4	Ladislav Zupancic	Zagreb		
7	Filip Cec			
8	Goran Peuc	Zagreb		
9	Marko Cikos			
10	Damir Simpovic	Zagreb	1805	156

Czech Republic

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
4	Ondrej Baudys	Hlinsko	1911	1008
9	Jan Lamper	Zlin	1881	530

Denmark

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
4	Maren Dang	Aarhus	1896	849
10	Dirk Tarp	Odense C	1866	416

England

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
4	Martin Garcia	London	1949	481
10	Quentin Martin	Exeter	1918	620

Estonia

1	Martti Lauri			
2	Tanel Lumiste		1741	310
3	Neeme Loorits		1741	239
4	Juhan Kaldre		1741	290
5	Eero Mander		1741	193
6	Margus Liber		1741	133
7	Veljo Hagu		1741	283
8	Kaarel Isak		1697	55
9	Mart Pechter		1697	219
9	Aare Klooster	Tallinn	1696	78

Finland

1		Helsinki	2110	715
2	Arto Hiltunen	Helsinki	2029	642
3	Tomi Walamies	Kauniainen	1971	581
4	Antti Puurula		1934	248
5	Arthur Björk		1927	189
6	Erno Ekebom		1833	331
7	Mike Wall		1807	135
8	Seppo Toikka		1803	771
8	Antti Koskimaki		1803	395
10	Mikko Paraskallio	Espoo	1861	452

France

1	Gabriel Nassif		2084	1731
2	Olivier Ruel		2079	1422
3	Alexis Dumay		2030	854
4	Christophe Haim		2012	660
5	Wilfried Ranque		2006	1057
6	Antoine Menard		1997	397
7	Pierre Malherbaud		1986	1549
8	Sylvain Launol	Bagnols sur Ceze	1981	879
9	Nicolas Olivieri	Montpellier	1975	843
10	Raphael Levy	Toulouse	1964	878

Germany

1	Kai Budde	Hamburg	2146	1514
2	Daniel Zink	Bochum	2065	485
3	Christoph Lippert		2054	645
4	Patrick Mello		2052	1224
5	Markus Bell		1992	781
6	Mario Zemke		1986	456
7	Dirk Baberowski		1985	692
8	David Brucker	Munchen	1979	630
9	Christian Lührs		1967	931
9	Wolfgang Eder	Weinheim	1967	1091

Greece

1	Dimitris Aperghis	Athens	1830	918
2	Dimitris Kopsidas	Iraklio, Crete	1830	221
3	Georgios Kapalas	Kipseli	1801	908
4	Alex Bakopoulos	Thessaloniki	1836	808
5	Emmanouil Nasos	Pefki	1801	766
6	B. Fatouros	Athens	1823	331
7	Kostas Kazas	Athens	1823	791
8	Jon Kosmidis	Thessaloniki	1823	791
9	Alex Joannidis		1801	806
9	Manos-Nikos Psichogios	Herakleion, Crete	1813	181

Guatemala

1	Felipe Marroquin			
2	Julio Antillón		1624	26
3	Rigoberto Castellan	Guatemala City	1615	18
4	Juan Ernesto Vossberg	Guatemala	1615	0
5	Victor Lockett	Guatemala	1610	9
	Jaime Gomez	Guatemala	1602	4
	Oliver Ortiz	Guatemala	1602	4
8	Rodrigo Chacon		1620	11
8	Ricardo Cuevas	Guatemala	1611	9
9	Javier Castellan	Guatemala City	1618	13

Hong Kong

1	Johnson Wan	Hong Kong	1859	446
2	Ngai Kwok Hing	Kowloon	1855	285
3	King Yim Kingston Tong	Hong Kong	1843	1000
4	Teddy Ng	Hong Kong	1829	511
5	Chun Hung Wong	Hong Kong	1843	1000
6	Kai Cheong Tang	Hong Kong	1839	449
7	Shing Ngan	Hong Kong	1843	1000
8	Wing Tat Leung	Hong Kong	1829	1000
9	Hon Ming Au Yeung	Hong Kong	1811	1000
10	Wai Hong Sit	Hong Kong	1810	317

Hungary

1	Gabor Fagy	Budapest	1915	1000
2	Zsolt Tolvai	Budapest	1915	240
3	Károly Lipták	Budapest	1875	1000
4	Michael Durham	Budapest	1861	1000
5	Andras Balogh	Budapest	1837	1000
6	La'za's Szabo	Budapest	1836	837
7	Ferenc Dobronay	Budapest	1811	1000
8	Tinor Miklos	Budapest	1813	241
9	Gabor Hegyi	Budapest	1811	1000
10	Laszlo Zsembery	Budapest	1797	338

Iceland

1	Arelius Areliusarson	Reykjavik	1844	1000
2	Yngvi Sighvatsson	Reykjavik	1791	1000
3	Stefan Fridriksson	Reykjavik	1719	1000
4	Johann Molier	Reykjavik	1721	1000
5	Marteinn Fridriksson	Reykjavik	1719	1000
6	Gudmundur Viggosson	Hafnarfjordur	1717	1000
7	Ragnar Kjartansson	Reykjavik	1716	1000
8	Einar Baldvinsson	Reykjavik	1676	1000
9	Gunnar Johannson	Reykjavik	1665	1000
10	Arni Sigurdsson	Reykjavik	1662	169

Indonesia

1	Donny Kristianto		1827	1000
2	Andy Budiharto	Surabaya	1820	340
3	Dennis Yuliadinata	Jakarta	1801	1000
4	Welly Hadiwidjaja	Jakarta	1790	581
5	Rudy Widjaja	Bandung Utara	1781	241
6	Oliver Suryatenggara	Tangerang	1765	191
6	Kawi Santosa	Jakarta Barat	1765	241
8	Jonsen Sulaeman	Jakarta Barat	1753	1000
9	Vidianto Wijaya	Jakarta	1749	1000
10	Michael Andreas	Jakarta Pusat	1748	149

Ireland

1	John Larkin		1923	331
2	Stewart Shinkins		1906	841
3	Diarmuid Quirke	Cork	1853	91
4	Robert Mckeon		1840	981
5	David Kearney	Dublin	1840	874
6	Eoin Brosnan	Swords	1812	577
7	Justin Walsh	Limerick	1796	991
8	Oliver Hyde	County Cork	1787	231
9	Thomas McDonnell	Limerick	1782	237
10	Ed Moynihan	Dublin	1777	175

Israel

1		Jerusalem		
2	Ayal Hassidim	Jerusalem	1823	141
3	Orr Bildner	Tel-Aviv	1811	1000
4	Eyal Leshem	Jerusalem	1795	1000
5	Daniel Bird	Haifa	1794	1000
6	Danny Yosef	Kiriat Motzkin	1793	191
7	Nadav Zivelin		1791	421
8	Baruchi Kimchi	Kochav	1790	1000
9	Alex Shternshain		1781	1000
10	Evgeny Golobrosdky	Givataim	1744	123

Italy

1	Andrea Santin	Trieste	2068	426
2	Giammaria Muratori		2006	1144
3	Federico Dato		1983	1111
4	Matteo Di Tomaso		1982	544
5	Raffaele Lo Moro		1961	1602
6	Luca Chiera		1951	1134
7	Dario Parazzoli		1945	991
8	Matteo Bianchi		1944	991
9	Alessandro Vegna	La Spezia	1940	647
10	Stefano Fiore	Roma	1937	896

Japan

1			2070	1000
2	Yosuu Ikeda	Meguro-ku	2033	996
3	Hasahiko Morita		2031	1000
4	Jin Okamoto		2026	1075
5	Gorou Matsuo	Kahoku-gun	2013	517
6	Tsuyoshi Ikeda	Fukuoka-shi	1999	657
7	Takao Higaki	Kamo-gun	1993	712
8	Masashiro Kuroda	Osaka-shi	1986	984
	Takayuki Nagaoka		1981	1007
10	Shunhei Nakamura	Hirakata-shi	1976	882

Luxembourg

1	Charles Delvaux		1791	1000
2	Romain Glodt	Kiel	1725	84
3	erome Vilm		1681	1000
4	Daniel Gallion	Kiel	1740	191
5	Fabrice Caurla		1681	1000
6	Steve Bruck	Tetange	1681	1000
7	Charel Lorang	Luxembourg	1681	1000
8	Steve Hatto	Izeg	1665	141
9	hemp Weihnachter		1661	1000
10	Marc Carvl	Aspelt	1659	51

Malaysia

1	Pang Ming Wee			
2	Allen Tan Boon Hor			
3	Wai Kin Au Yong			
4	Ian Chuen Hwai	Kuala Lumpur		
5		Kuala Lumpur		
6		Selangor		
7		Petaling Jaya		
8		Georgetown		
9		Penang		
10	Kazir Kosdin	Kuala Lumpur	1822	690

Mexico

1	Gerardo Godinez Estrada	Nezahualcoyotl		
2	Alexander Sacal	Mexico City		
3	Carlos Medina	Mexico City		
4	Enric Rodamilans	Mexico City		
5	Jorge Gonzalez	Mexico City		
6	Gustavo Chapela	Mexico City		
7	Francisco Barboza	Mexico City		
8	Julio Ayala Vazquez	Mexico City		
9	Christian Negrete	Mexico City		
10	Aldo Gonzalez	Mexico City	1815	264

Netherlands

1	Kamiel Cornelissen	Enschede	2080	800
2	Joost Vollebregt	Amsterdam	2067	708
3	Frank Karsten		2033	635
4	Jelger Wiegersma		2028	1165
5	Alexander Witt		2018	1023
6	Arjan van Leeuwen	Boetermeer	1998	614
7	Tom van de Logt	Roesbeek	1987	625
8	Bram Snepvangers	Utrecht		
9	Matt Henstra	Tilburg	1925	369
10	Victor van den Broek	Eindhoven	1924	605

New Zealand

	Scott Richards			
2	James White			
3	Kerel Laycock			
3	Roger Miller			
5	Sergey Norin			
	Digby Carter	Christchurch		
	Damian Brown-Santirso	Christchurch		
	Gene Brumby	Wellington		
	Mark Simpson			
10	John Deriz	Auckland	1825	346

Northern Ireland

1	Thomas Michael Carlisle	Carrickfergus		
2	David Gray			
3	Adrian Donnelly			
4	Ryan Harvey			
5	Roger Dane			
6	Martie Deery			
6	Ronan Donnelly			
8	Mark Hunter			
9	Thomas Monaghan			
10	Colin McBurney	County Armagh	1709	524

Norway

1	Øyvind Ødegaard		1997	1561
2	Endre Skjerne	Oslo	1963	637
3	Lovre Crnobori	Oslo	1959	453
4	Kim Orud	Oslo	1942	472
5	Sigurd Eskeland		1928	1238
6	Bjorn Jacumsen	Jessheim	1914	1141
7	Thomas Gundersen	Trondheim	1906	651
8	Egon Holdhus		1902	429
9	Øystein Hasnes	Trondheim	1899	713
10	Christer Lipnes	Godvik	1895	583

Peru

1	Jorge Melgar			
2	Steven Ludwig Vidalon Hoyos	Lima		
3	Juan Carlos de la Riva Fort	Lima		
4	Waldry Marquez de Oliveira S.	Lima		
	Castareda Maick	Lima		
6	Antonio Vargas	Lima		
7	Erick Pezo	Lima		
8	Renato Bustamante	Arequipa		
9	Juan Barzola	Lima		
10	Luis Enrique Beltran Carranza	Lima	1724	138

Philippines

1	Bayani Manansala	Caloocan City	1885	322
2	Felix Gonzales		1878	874
3	Frederick Salazar		1874	405
4	Francis Robert Profeta	Manila	1872	1141
5	Richie Chua	Quezon City		324
6	Charles Racelis	Pasig	1841	431
7	Edsel Alvarez	Quezon City		504
8	Aldrin Demavivas	Manila		
9	Michael Apolinar	Manila		420
10	Mario Padua	Quezon City	1816	905

Poland

1	Przemek Oberbek	Warsaw		864
2	Marcin Goral Horecki	Zakopane		555
3	Pawel Karaszewski	Warsaw	1872	850
4	Krzysztof Domaszewski	Warsaw	1864	407
5	Marcin Sados	Warsaw		254
6	Radoslaw Gromko	Bialystok		628
7	Adrian Ciszek	Krakow		609
8	Krzysztof Krupicki	Bialystok		317
	Piotr Widuch	Laziska Gorne	1836	383
10	Marcin Cieslikowski	Warszawa	1827	591

Portugal

1	Frederico Bastos			
2	Helder Coelho			
3	Kuniyoshi Ishii	Vila Franca de Xira		
3	Joao Duarte			
5	Rui Mariani	Lisboa		
6	Luis Sousa	Evora		
7	Renato Graça			
7	Marcio Carvalho	Lisbon		
9	Pedro Bailadeira	Forte da Casa		
10	Francisco Pinto		1865	440

Russian Federation

1	Andrey Osipov		1925	629
2	Alexander Strakhov		1896	1219
3	Eugene Nefedov	St. Petersburg	1893	1500
4	Yaroslav Kondratiev	St. Petersburg	1892	1071
5	Eugeny Okin	Moscow		
6	Alexey Smirnov	St. Petersburg		
7	Yuri Bagashev	Moscow		
8	Albert Khamzin	Novosibirsk		
9	Marat Asanov	Moscow		
10	Alexei Shestak	St. Petersburg	1843	556

Scotland

1		Beith	1926	663
1		Perth	1897	1479
		Dundee		
		Dundee		
		Dundee		
		Midlothian		
		Riccarton		
	Darryl Tweedale			
	Barry Brown			
10	Douglas Nelson	Clarkston	1790	248

Singapore

1	Junyang Ang			909
2	Chang Chua			449
3	Albertus Law		1934	785
4	Kok Seng Ong	Singapore	1929	432
5	Ming Huang Royce Chai		1919	679
6	Sam Lei Kang Lau	Singapore	1917	685
6	Ding Yuen Leong		1917	838
8	Kelvin Yew Teck Hoon		1912	623
9	Yujian Zhou	Singapore	1883	621
10	Nicholas Jonathan Wong	Singapore	1866	1252

Slovak Republic

1	Robert Jurkovic	Bratislava		
2	Jan Tomcani	Bratislava		
3	Juraj Smrek	Bratislava		
4	Peter Bero			
5	Dalibor Szegho			
6	Rasto Stranak			
7	Martin Danter	Bratislava		
8	Martin Polak	Bratislava		
9	Michal Guldan	Bratislava		
10	Richard Vee Glasner	Bratislava	1753	170

Slovenia

1	Jakob Tomse	Ljubljana		
1	Matej Brezavscek	Ljubljana		
5	Ziga Fritz			
	Gregor Strubelj	Krsko		
	Ziga Skrbec			
	Andrej Brezavscek			
10	Drejan Tinkauser	Ajdovscina	1775	266

South Africa

1	Andrew Mitchell	Cape Town	2017	1081
2	Pieter Loubser	Bellville	1926	475
3	Jason Neale	Pretoria	1861	1
4	David Hofmeyr	Johannesburg	1874	450
5	Grant van Dyk	Cape Town	1871	391
6	Andrew Klein	Cape Town	1847	42
6	Lourens Scholtz	Pretoria	1847	1081
8	Jaco Prinsloo	Pretoria	1855	218
9	Russel Lunt	Cape Town	1847	1081
10	Andrew Stephens	Johannesburg	1846	520

South Korea

1	Sang Seok Lee	[illegible]	1811	1
2	Ji Hoon Kim	[illegible]	1795	1081
3	Heung-Jin Jung	[illegible]	1786	1081
4	Joshua Cho	[illegible]	1771	1081
5	Hyun-Il Jang	[illegible]	1766	1081
6	Joon-ho Hong	[illegible]	1750	1
7	Kang Huang	[illegible]	1741	1081
8	Dong-Woo Son	[illegible]	1741	1081
8	Tae-yun Kim	Kyung Sangnam-Do	1741	81
10	Sung Hun Lee	Seoul	1740	244

Spain

1	Carlos Barrado	Madrid	1950	1
2	Daniel Bethencourt	Vilanova i la Geltrú	1924	1081
3	Hector Fuentes	[illegible]	1901	1081
4	Victor Cabrera Martinez	Barcelona	1897	611
5	Ivan Garcia	Las Palmas	1891	1081
5	Lucio Moratinos	Madrid	1889	114
7	Omar Sagol	[illegible]	1881	1081
8	Daniel Hidalgo	Tenerife	1872	1081
9	Roc Herms	[illegible]	1871	1081
10	Guillermo Fuentes	Barcelona	1867	343

Sweden

1	Jens Thoren	Umeå	2114	1081
2	Mattias Jorstedt	Goteborg	2111	1077
3	Rickard Österberg	Jonkoping	1981	570
4	Olle Råde	Goteborg	1981	556
5	Anton Jonsson	Umeå	1961	1081
6	Thomas Roshoim	Malmo	1955	494
7	Johan Sadeghpour	Umeå	1951	551
8	Kristian Hellman	Malmo	1950	310
8	Magnus Lantto	Umeå	1950	339
10	Mattias Kettl	Mockfjärd	1932	642

Switzerland

1	Dave Montreuil	Bern	1951	1081
2	Marco Steger	Kuriten	1918	1081
3	Laurent Aubaud	Genève	1881	1081
4	Martin Zuercher	Biglen	1874	1081
5	Adrian Hug	Thun	1857	1081
6	Alexander Blumke	Geneva	1855	211
7	Christian Strebel	Zurich	1843	1081
8	Dirk Rattai	Zurich	1837	1081
9	Matthias Kunzler	Bern	1831	1081
10	Oliver Bingmann	Affoltern am Albis	1830	247

Taiwan

1	Tzu Ching Kuo	Taipei	1931	1081
2	Tobey Tamber	Kaohsiung	1911	1314
3	Chi Chung Hwang	Taipei	1906	1081
4	Jack Ho	Taipei	1899	1081
5	Chih-Hsiang Chang	Taipei	1883	1081
6	Chen Yu Weng	Taipei	1880	676
7	Chiang Nien	Taipei	1878	1081
8	Wen Jhen Hwang	Taipei	1874	1081
9	Horng Gi Tsai	Taipei	1869	1081
10	Jacky Jang	Taichung	1868	473

Thailand

1	Boonchai Jirapongtraklul	[illegible]	1791	1081
2	Mongkut Tachasukjai	Bangkok	1791	1081
3	Wattanachai Chenarak	[illegible]	1791	1081
4	Phattharaset Yeodkolkij	Bangkok	1791	1081
5	Chet Surapanpirak	[illegible]	1791	1081
6	Nimiart Tungjaroong	Bangkok	1790	1081
7	Piyamate Opaskit	[illegible]	1789	1081
7	Chansak Chmeta	Bangkok	1789	1081
9	Ekapong Pronpormikit	[illegible]	1788	1081
10	Pragan Maneesharnmuang	Bangkok	1786	227

Turkey

1	[illegible]	[illegible]	1795	1081
2	Basar Coskunoglu	Istanbul	1795	1081
3	Turcak Caner	Istanbul	1791	1081
4	Aras Senyuz	Istanbul	1790	1081
5	Hakki Ozbasli	[illegible]	1789	1081
6	[illegible]	Istanbul	1781	1081
7	[illegible]	Istanbul	1781	1081
8	Siyar Erzen	Istanbul	1772	1081
8	Baris Ozistek	[illegible]	1772	1081
10	Gokhan Sarisik	Istanbul	1765	83

Ukraine

1	Yuri Kolomeyko	[illegible]	1818	1081
2	Artem Kuzachuk	[illegible]	1808	1081
3	Andrey Rybalchenko	[illegible]	1841	1081
4	Boris Zlotolabko	[illegible]	1839	1081
5	Sergey Kuznetsov	[illegible]	1811	1081
6	Roman Mayborroda	[illegible]	1811	1081
7	Andrey Gubachev	[illegible]	1811	1081
8	Andrey Alekseev	[illegible]	1808	1081
9	Nick Samosvatov	[illegible]	1806	1081
10	Vladimir Ostalyanyuk	[illegible]	1803	1081

United Arab Emirates

1	Mark Marsden	[illegible]	1847	1081
2	Jordan Gallant	[illegible]	1841	1081
[illegible]	Russel Mirara	[illegible]	1841	1081
4	Jeff Kearns	[illegible]	1840	1081
5	Vishak Menon	[illegible]	1839	1081
6	Jaksa Knez	[illegible]	1837	1081
7	Dylan Koopman	[illegible]	1836	1081
8	Sina Al-Ras	[illegible]	1835	1081
9	James Dabbs	[illegible]	1834	1081
10	Stephen Thornhill	[illegible]	1830	43

United States

1	Sol Malka	[illegible]	2104	1081
2	Robert Dougherty	[illegible]	2112	1081
3	Ken Ho	San Francisco	2112	1081
3	Osyp Lebedowicz	Union	2112	1081
3	Eric Froehlich	Springfield	2112	1081
6	Andrew Wolf	Roswell	2073	1314
[illegible]	Antonino De Rosa	Port St Lucie	2061	1081
8	Brian Seiden	San Diego	2061	1081
8	Jonathan Sonne	[illegible]	2061	1081
10	Thomas Grieve	Nashua	2058	975

Uruguay

1	Rodrigo Asuaga	Montevideo	1841	1081
2	Jong Won Kim	Montevideo	1809	1081
3	Victor Pintos	Montevideo	1808	1081
4	Ismael Carnales	Montevideo	1803	271
5	Jorge Estefan	[illegible]	1801	1081
6	Ian Lampel	[illegible]	1800	1081
6	Alexander Westerley	[illegible]	1800	1081
8	Guillermo Gruszka	Montevideo	1780	1081
9	Fernando Veiga	[illegible]	1779	1081
10	Diego Lafuente	Montevideo	1778	224

Venezuela

1	Eduardo Muñoz	[illegible]	1846	1081
2	Leonardo Uzcategui	Caracas	1838	1081
[illegible]	Jonatan Alves	[illegible]	1838	1081
4	Edward Peraza	Barquisimeto	1815	1081
[illegible]	Rafael Meneses	Caracas	1806	1081
[illegible]	Jhonnie Goncalves	Caracas	1796	1081
[illegible]	Ramon Sanchez	Barquisimeto	1781	1081
[illegible]	Jose Da Silva	Caracas	1743	1081
[illegible]	Carlon Garcia	Caracas	1743	1081
10	Michel Leon	Caracas	1741	241

Wales

1	Richard Edbury	Cardiff	1841	1081
[illegible]	Wai Seng (Jimmy) Chung	[illegible]	1841	1081
[illegible]	Ioan Llwyd	[illegible]	1841	1081
[illegible]	Steve Batten	[illegible]	1840	1081
[illegible]	Roy Williams	[illegible]	1838	1081
6	Clint Oldridge	Cardiff	1781	1081
7	Philip Brett	[illegible]	1781	1081
8	Madog Williams	[illegible]	1780	1081
9	Simon Cox	Mid Glamorgan	1746	1081
10	Stephen Brown	Cardiff	1746	775

Yugoslavia

1	Dusan Kamenov	[illegible]	1841	1081
2	Vladimir Kamenov	[illegible]	1840	1081
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1840	1081
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1839	1081
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1838	1081
5	Milos Milinkovic	[illegible]	1838	1081
6	Daniel Csanyi	[illegible]	1838	1081
7	Lazar Grkavac	Novi Sad	1838	1081
[illegible]	Milan Raicevic	Belgrade	1683	63
9	Uros Golik	Novi Sad	1678	107
9	Milutin Kecmanic	Belgrad	1678	89

Ask the DCI

In each issue, DCI Manager Jeff Donais answers questions from Sideboard readers. To submit a question, email jeff.donais@wizards.com with "Ask the DCI" as the subject line.

Q: I'm planning to attend a team-format Pro Tour Qualifier in hopes of qualifying for Pro Tour–Boston. How do team-format Qualifiers work?

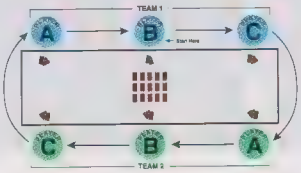
A: First of all, you'll need to find two friends to play with—all team-format Pro Tour Qualifiers use three-person teams. Find out where the Qualifier is held **(wizards.com/tournaments)** and make sure to arrive with time to spare.

During registration, you'll have to designate the members of your team as players A, B, and C. You'll always play against the opposing team's player with the same letter.

When you start the tournament, your team will be given two tournament packs and four boosters. The tournament packs will always be from the large set of the current block. If the second or third expansions have been released in the block, the booster packs will be either all from the second expansion or two packs each from the second and third expansions, depending on whether the Qualifier occurs before or after the official release date of the third expansion. With this set of cards, you'll make three decks with a minimum of 40 cards each. Any card not in someone's main deck has to be registered in the sideboard of one of the three players. You can have as many or as few cards in someone's sideboard as you wish, as long as all the extra cards are registered.

Once the decks are registered, you'll play against the opposing team member with the same letter designation as you. While it's not that important during the Sealed Deck portion of the tournament, the letter designation will be very important during the final draft. Remember that you can't change your designations between the Sealed Deck portion and the draft, so think ahead and choose your positions carefully. Draft seating is shown below.

During the draft, players will each draft separate decks. No verbal communication is allowed, but hand signals are permitted, and some teams develop sophisticated hand signal systems. Some teams have the center player (the B position) decide the draft picks for the entire team. Whichever strategy you choose, be sure to plan ahead.



Q: Will the Standard format ever change from being the last two blocks and the most recent base set? Will Extended ever change?

A: There are no plans to change the Standard-format rotation. It seems to be a pretty good balance of keeping things interesting while allowing cards to be used for a couple of years. A few sets will probably rotate out of Extended sometime before the end of 2003. The exact time has not been determined.

Q: Why haven't there been any banned cards recently?

A: It seems that **Magic** R&D is doing a better job of balancing sets! It's never fun to ban cards, but it's great that no card has been so abused that it's needed to be banned.

Q: Are there any plans to cancel the **Magic** Pro Tour? What about the Junior Super Series?

A: Absolutely not. Although we do move money around the various tournament programs, the Pro Tour is a core part of **Magic** and it is here to stay. The Junior Super Series is also an extremely important part of the **Magic** tournament structure and has a bright future. In fact, last year we doubled the scholarship payout of the Junior Super Series Championship.

Q: Why isn't there a Type 1 or Type 1.5 Pro Tour?

A: As fun as these formats can be, there aren't enough cards in circulation or enough players interested to support either format with a Pro Tour.

DCI Format Construction Rules

For the most updated DCI deck construction rules, check thedci.com

Standard

Permitted Sets
Seventh Edition
Invasion
Planeshift

Banned Cards
None

Odyssey Block Constructed

Permitted Sets

Banned Cards
None

Invasion Block Constructed

Permitted Sets
Invasion

Banned Cards
None

Masques Block Constructed

Permitted Sets
Mercadian Masques
Nemesis
Prophecy

Banned Cards
Lin Sivvi, Defiant Hero
Rishadan Port

Urza Block Constructed

Permitted Sets
Urza's Destiny

Banned Cards
Gaea's Cradle
Memory Jar
Serra's Sanctum
Time Spiral
Voltaic Key
Windfall

Tempest Block Constructed

Permitted Sets
Tempest
Stronghold
Exodus

Banned Cards
Cursed Scroll

Mirage Block Constructed

Permitted Sets
Mirage
Visions
Weatherlight

Banned Cards
Squandered Resources

Ice Age Block Constructed

Permitted Sets
Homelands

Banned Cards
Zuran Orb

Extended

Permitted Sets
(Sixth Edition)
Alliances
Mirage
Visions
Weatherlight
Tempest
Mercadian Masques
Nemesis
Prophecy
Invasion
Planeshift
Apocalypse
The ten dual lan
Banned Cards
Amulet of Quoz
Lotus Petal
Mana Vault
Memory Jar
Zuran Orb

Type 1

Permitted Sets
All basic and
promotional cards
Banned Cards
Amulet of Quoz
Bronze Tablet
Chaos Orb
from
Demonic Attorney
Timmerian Fiends
Restricted Cards
Berserk
Channel
Rotation
Fastbond
Memory
Mind Over Matter
Mind Twist
Mox Diamond
Mox Pearl
Mox Ruby
Mox Sapphire
Tutor
Tolarian Academy
Tutor

Type 1.5

promotional
Banned Cards
Type 1 Banned
and Restricted lists

Worldwide Tournament News

by Jeff Donais, DCI Tournament Manager

Junior Super Series

The 2002 Junior Super Series (JSS) Championship is fast approaching and there are still a few JSS Challenges remaining. If you know players ages 15 or under, help them build a Standard deck and get them to a JSS Challenge. Not only do entrants each receive premium foil cards, but they also each receive additional premium foil cards for doing well in the event. One of the foils is the original *Arabian Nights* version of City of Brass, which is very cool. The Challenges also offer $1,000 scholarships for their winners, invitations to play at the JSS Championship, and **Magic** for a Year!

The JSS Championship will again be held at *Disney's Wide World of Sports™* Complex in Orlando, Florida, where $100,000 in scholarship prizes will be awarded to the best junior **Magic** players in the world. If you haven't already qualified for the event through DCI rating or a JSS Challenge, you'll have one last opportunity on Friday, May 31, at the Junior Super Series Open. The Top 25 players from the Open will earn a chance to play in the Championship the next day. The event will be held concurrent with the 2002 U.S. National Championship, so it's a great opportunity to see two generations of **Magic** players engage in some of the best **Magic** play in the nation. **Wizards.com/jss** has detailed information about the JSS program.

Regional Championships

Most countries will be running their Regionals sometime around April. The main purpose of Regionals is to get you a shot at playing in your National Championship. If you miss Regionals, many countries have last-minute Qualifiers the day before Nationals that can help you earn a spot at Nationals. All Regionals are Standard Constructed. For more information, check out the Events section of **wizards.com**.

Arena League

There have been a few changes to the Arena League recently. First, you'll notice the logo has changed. It's a little flashier and more colorful. The free foil basic land cards have been removed in favor of slightly better end-of-season prizes. In addition, prizes are now awarded through redemption cards instead of being included in the Arena kit. This means that honest Arena organizers don't have to worry about the prize cards being sold on EBay before the season even starts.

The DCI players' organization now fully supports all Arena League activities and will enforce fair play and sporting conduct if called upon by league organizers. The DCI will also investigate and enforce policy to ensure that fraud is not being committed and that prizes are being awarded and redeemed legitimately. Although you do not earn DCI ratings points because Arena League play is not DCI-sanctioned, Arena organizers can apply to hold DCI-sanctioned tournaments in their stores. A popular choice is to run the league for several weeks, then hold a DCI-sanctioned tournament at the end of the league as a special event. If you're not already a DCI-sanctioned tournament organizer, visit **thedci.com** for information. If you are a store owner, you can order an Arena League kit through your Wizards of the Coast Direct Sales representative.

JUDGMENT™ PRERELEASE

The *Judgment* Prerelease tournaments will be held May 18–19. As always, players who attend will receive a unique premium rare from the set. Although it hasn't been officially announced yet, the Prerelease card and the language will be very cool. The *Judgment* set has some powerful green and white cards that will balance the overwhelming power of black in *Torment*, finishing off *Odyssey* block with a good balance of colors. Prerelease tournaments are the best deal around, with your entry fee getting you a fun day of play, an exclusive promo card, an *Odyssey* tournament pack, and three *Judgment* boosters. Check out our *Judgment* preview starting on page 34 of this magazine. Prerelease schedules are available at **wizards.com/tournaments**.

Magic The Gathering® amateur™ CHAMPIONSHIP

The 2002 Amateur Championship is fast approaching. Once again, the event will be held at the Origins Game Fair & Expo in Columbus, Ohio, on July 6. The event is open to all players who have never earned a pro point. This means that if you've never been in the Top 32 of a Grand Prix event and never played in a Pro Tour event, you're allowed to play at the Amateur Championship. Players who enter will each receive a free premium card from the DCI archives. The 2002 Amateur Championship will be the first major Standard tournament to use the *Judgment* set. Look to Sideboard.com to see the results and decklists from the event. One guarantee: You won't see Jon Finkel or Kai Budde playing, but they'll probably check out the decks to help prepare for the field at the World Championships.

Dauthi Slayer
Creature — Soldier
Shadow (This creature may block or be blocked by only creatures with shadow.)
Dauthi Slayer attacks each turn if able.
"A trip of life remains in the undergloom of Death: a visible form, though no heart beats within it."
—Homer, The Iliad, trans. Fitzgerald
2/2
Mana Leak
Counter target spell unless its controller pays 3.
"If a man will begin with certainties, he shall end in doubts."
—Sir Francis Bacon, The Advancement of Learning

Magic The Gathering® GRAND PRIX™ UPDATE

Some interesting experiments are coming up on the Grand Prix scene this summer. Three of the eight Grand Prix events feeding Pro Tour–Houston will be Standard Constructed. These will be the first-ever Standard Grand Prix events and should generate interesting attendance figures. These events will be held in Taiwan; Brazil; and Wisconsin, U.S.A. They will be held earlier than the rest of the Block Constructed Grand Prix events for Pro Tour–Houston in order to avoid having two Grand Prix Constructed formats at once. Interestingly, a Standard Grand Prix event was not scheduled for Japan for fear the attendance might rise out of control. It's still undecided whetherStandard will become a mainstay on the Grand Prix circuit, but the results of these three experimental events may influence the decision. As always, Grand Prix events award $25,000 in prize money, with $7,500 going straight into the pockets of the top Amateur finishers. If you don't already have a three-round bye, a Grand Prix Trial can help you get one.

Two team-format Grand Prix events are scheduled for 2002: Grand Prix–Nagyoya and Grand Prix–New Jersey. They will be Sealed Deck on Day 1, with the Top 20 teams advancing to team Rochester Draft on Day 2. Team Grand Prix events are some of the best ways to get qualified for the Pro Tour while having fun playing with two of your closest friends. These events award $25,000, with $5,000 going to teams whose members have 0 combined pro points. Check out wizards.com/grandprix for schedules for Grand Prix and Trials. Also check out the event calendar on page 62 of this magazine.

Events Calendar

April–November 2002

APRIL

tbd **Portugal National Championship** Standard & Booster Draft
1 **Israel National Championship–Tel Aviv** Standard & Booster Draft
6–7 **Grand Prix–Naples** Sealed Deck w/Booster Draft Final
6–7 **Yugoslavia National Championship–Novi Sad** Standard & Booster Draft
12 **UAE National Championship–Dubai** Standard & Booster Draft
13 **U.S./Canada Regionals** Standard
13–14 **Singapore National Championship–Singapore** Standard & Booster Draft
13–14 **Australia National Championship–Canberra** Standard & Booster Draft
13–14 **Iceland National Championship–Reykjavik** Standard & Booster Draft
13–14 **Norway National Championship–Oslo** Standard & Booster Draft
14 **Luxemburg National Championship–Strassen** Standard & Booster Draft
20–21 **Hong Kong National Championship–Hong Kong** Standard & Booster Draft
20–21 **Malaysia National Championship–Kuala Lumpur** Standard & Booster Draft
20–21 **Slovak Republic National Championship–Bratislava** Standard & Booster Draft
20–21 **Poland National Championship–Warsaw** Standard & Booster Draft
20–21 **New Zealand National Championship–Christchurch** Standard & Booster Draft
20–21 **Finland National Championship–Helsinki** Standard & Booster Draft
20–21 **Estonia National Championship–Tartu** Standard & Booster Draft
20–21 **Ukraine National Championship–Kiev** Standard & Booster Draft
27–28 **South Africa National Championship–Johannesburg** Standard & Booster Draft
27–28 **Switzerland National Championship–Bern** Standard & Booster Draft
27–28 **Austria National Championship–Salzburg** Standard & Booster Draft
27–28 **France National Championship–St. Denis** Standard & Booster Draft
27–28 **Hungary National Championship–Budapest** Standard & Booster Draft
27–28 **Ireland National Championship–Dublin** Standard & Booster Draft
27–28 **Russia National Championship–Moscow** Standard & Booster Draft
27–28 **Spain National Championship–Madrid** Standard & Booster Draft
27–28 **Thailand National Championship–Bangkok** Standard & Booster Draft
27–28 **Argentina National Championship–Buenos Aires** Standard & Booster Draft
28 **Peru National Championship–Lima** Standard & Booster Draft
28 **Greece National Championship–Athens** Standard & Booster Draft
28 **Mexico National Championship–Mexico City** Standard & Booster Draft

MAY

May–July **Qualifier Season for Pro Tour–Boston** Team Sealed w/Rochester Final
2–5 **Nice Masters Series** Extended
3–5 **Pro Tour–Nice** Booster Draft
4–5 **Romania National Championship–Bucharest** Standard & Booster Draft
4–5 **Slovenia National Championship–Ljubjana** Standard & Booster Draft
4–5 **Turkey National Championship–Istanbul** Standard & Booster Draft
10–11 **Germany National Championship–Heidelberg** Standard & Booster Draft
10–11 **Sweden National Championship–Linköping** Standard & Booster Draft
11–12 **Netherlands National Championship–Utrecht** Standard & Booster Draft
11–12 **Scotland National Championship–Edinburgh** Standard & Booster Draft
11–12 **Chinese Taipei National Championship–Taipei** Standard & Booster Draft
11–12 **Grand Prix–Milwaukee** Standard
11–12 **Grand Prix–Nagoya** Team Sealed w/Rochester Final
11–12 **Wales National Championship–Cardiff** Standard & Booster Draft
18–19 ***Judgment* Prerelease** Sealed Deck
25–26 **Brazil National Championship–São Paulo** Standard & Booster Draft
25–26 **England National Championship–Birmingham** Standard & Booster Draft
25–26 **Philippines National Championship–Manila** Standard & Booster Draft
27 ***Judgment* Release Date**
31 **Junior Super Series Open–Orlando** Standard
31–June 2 **U.S. National Championship–Orlando** Standard & Booster Draft
31–June 2 **Japan National Championship–Tokyo** Standard & Booster Draft

JUNE

1–2 **Italy National Championship–Firenze** Standard & Booster Draft
1–2 **Junior Super Series Championship–Orlando** Standard
2 **Venezuela National Championship–Barquisimeto** Standard & Booster Draft
8 **Uruguay National Championship–Montevideo** Standard & Booster Draft
14–16 **Canada National Championship–Toronto** Standard & Booster Draft
15–16 **Chile National Championship–Santiago** Standard & Booster Draft
28–30 **European Championship–Amsterdam** Standard & Booster Draft
29–30 **Grand Prix–New Jersey** Team Sealed w/Rochester Finals

JULY

4–7 **Origins International Game Expo & Fair–Columbus**
6 **Amateur Championship at Origins** Standard
13–14 **Grand Prix–Taipei** Standard
13–14 **Grand Prix–São Paolo** Standard

AUGUST

August–September **Qualifier Season for Pro Tour–Houston** Block Constructed
tbd **Grand Prix–Sapporo** Block Constructed
8–11 **Gen Con Game Fair–Milwaukee**
10 ***Sideboard* Team Challenge at Gen Con** (nonsanctioned)
14–18 **World Championships–Sydney** Standard, Booster Draft & Block
31–September 1 **Grand Prix–London** Block Constructed

SEPTEMBER

7–8 **Grand Prix–Cleveland** Block Constructed
14–15 **Grand Prix–Buenos Aires** Block Constructed
27–29 **Pro Tour–Boston** Team Sealed and Rochester Draft
28–29 **Grand Prix–Hamburg** Block Constructed
28–29 ***Onslaught* Prerelease** Sealed Deck

OCTOBER

October–November **Qualifier Season for Pro Tour–Chicago** Sealed w/Rochester Final
tbd **Grand Prix–Utsunomiya** Sealed w/Rochester Final
7 ***Onslaught* Release Date**
12–13 **Grand Prix–Copenhagen** Sealed w/Rochester Final
26–27 **Grand Prix–Philadelphia** Sealed w/Rochester Final

NOVEMBER

tbd **Grand Prix–Melborne** Sealed w/Rochester Final
2–3 **State/Provincial/Territory/Island Championships** Standard
14–17 **Houston Masters Series** Extended
15–17 **Pro Tour–Houston** Extended
23–24 **Grand Prix–Los Angeles** Sealed w/Rochester Final
30–December 1 **Grand Prix–Reims** Extended

Subject to Change
Events, dates, locations, and formats may change, especially for tournaments farther ahead in the schedule. Check wizards.com/tournaments for the most up-to-date event information.

Your national champion needs you. Come support him at this prestigious event. The European Championship is a competition unlike any other. You'll enjoy the many side-events, but most of all, you'll experience the suspense as your country's top 8 players battle it out with Europe's best.

GP Antwerp	2-3 March 2002	8 qualifications for	Pro Tour
Nice	Venue: Stuurboord (Hangar 26) – Rijnkaai 96 – 2000		
Antwerpen	Format: Sealed Deck	Registration fee: 25 Euro	
Pre-registration : +32-70-233.277			

DCI

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